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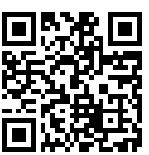

LIFE IS A JEST

By

C. W. THOMPSON

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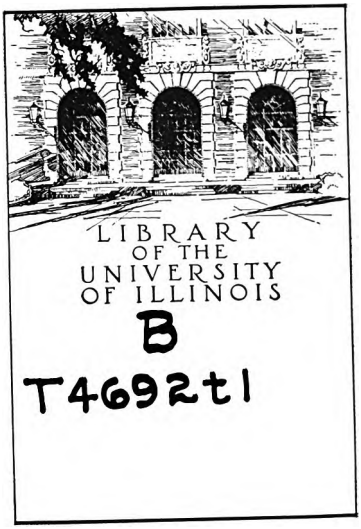

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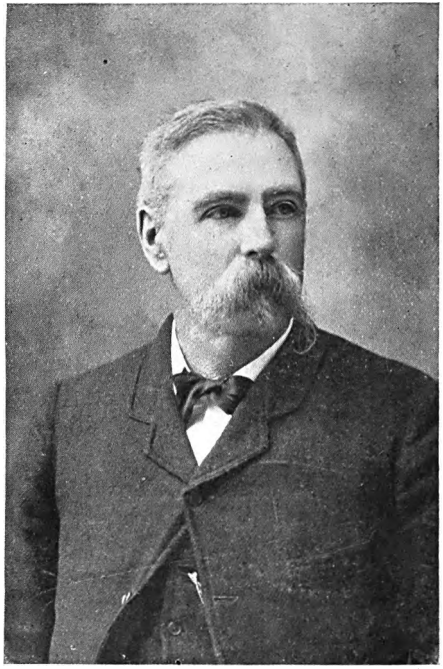

Chas W Thompson

MRS. THOMPSON, WHO ACCOMPANIED HER HUSBAND TO KLONDYKE IN '98

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LIFE IS A JEST

THE TESTIMONY OF A WANDERER

BY

CHARLES W. THOMPSON

AUTHOR OF "MANUAL OF THE SEXTANT"

OLD SOUTHERIAN, SOLDIER, AUTHOR, DIAMOND DIGGER IN SOUTH AFRICA, GOLD PROSPECTOR IN THE KLONDYKE RUSH OF '98, GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN CYPRUS, RECONNAISSANCE OFFICER ON THE GOLD COAST AND MANY OTHER THINGS IN OTHER PLACES

"Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it."

JOHN GAY.

LONDON
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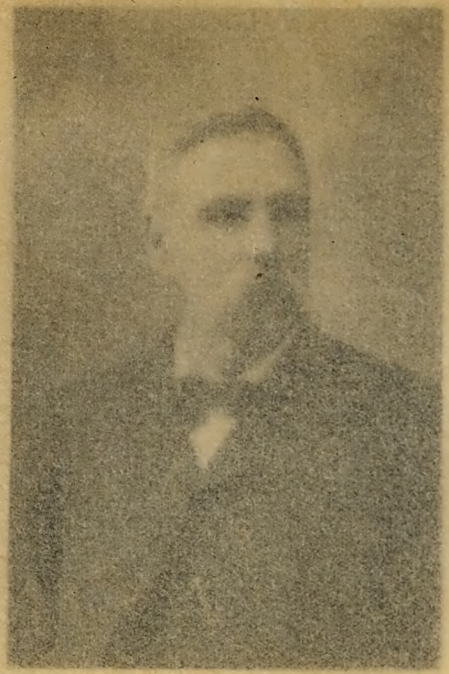

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PROLOGUE

This is my story, Sir: a trifle, indeed, I assure you.
Much more, perchance, might be said—but I hold him of all men most lightly
Who swerves from the truth in his tale.—*Bret Harte.*

I left Rugby in the early '60's "to take a seat in a Merchant's Office" because those who were responsible for me believed, as it was believed in those days, that this, if not a royal road to fortune, was a highly respectable road for a young man to pursue. For three years in the vicinity of Finsbury Circus my life was wasted in copying (manuscript) letters into the "Inland Letter Book," sticking postage stamps on envelopes, and running about the City getting acceptances on Bills of Exchange; that was literally all the work I had to do, and all the experience I gained in business life! Then I quit, and for fifty-eight years my life has been that of a Nomad. A jest!

In these pages, the relation of every incident is rigidly true; of course, this guarantee of veracity does not cover those statements that are quoted, nor descriptions of events that were obviously beyond my ken.

Chronological order has not been observed; it has been defied.

In dealing with events happening in various countries, the narrative, in many cases, is couched in language comprising local colloquialisms. It is hoped that the reader who has not lived abroad will "catch-

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on " to the meaning of those expressions that may be new to him. No apology is offered for this method of expressing ideas, as in our struggle through life we neither speak nor think in the elegant and classic diction of the Masters of Literature—quite the reverse.

C. W. T.

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Chapter I

PLACER MINING FOR GOLD AND PLATINUM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—CITY OF VANCOUVER

"Mountings of diamonds in British Columb-yah"; thus yelled the paper boys scurrying down Gray's Inn Road, London, one evening towards the end of the autumn of 1910. An old diamond digger from South Africa, seizing one of the newspapers, read therein that on Mount Olivine, near the village of Tulameen, Similkameen District, British Columbia, Mr. Charles Camsell (now Dr. Camsell, Deputy-Minister of Mines), of the Canadian Geological Survey, had discovered diamonds; true, they were very small, but they were undoubtedly the genuine article. Now, the passion for gold digging and diamond digging, when once acquired, is like that for drink, it very seldom leaves its victim, so the fate of the Kimberley digger was sealed—he *had* to go.

However, some delay was inevitable; navigation on the St. Lawrence River was closed for the winter, so a traveller would have to take the long and unpleasant overland trip from the seaport of St. John's to Montreal, followed by a six-days' railway journey to the Pacific Slope; and further, by the time he arrived at his destination the mountains would be covered with snow from four to ten feet deep, which would effectually prohibit prospecting. No move could be made till the following May, when navigation on the St. Lawrence would reopen.

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That winter, at one of the annual Shepherd's Bush Exhibitions in London a Canadian Railroad Company had placed on view a very beautiful, highly varnished model of one of their ocean steamers. It was a fascinating exhibit; there were sweet little life-buoys, nickel-plated whistles, mud-hooks, steering-wheels, and diminutive glazed portholes draped with red silk curtains. Here and there, one caught through baby windows a glimpse of luxurious miniature beds with snow-white sheets, dolls' chests of drawers, wash-stands, tooth-glasses, and all the comforts of civilization. Beneath the model was a printed notice explaining that the ship was fitted with the very latest arrangement of "Thermo-tank" which, in each period of fifteen minutes, would fling overboard every atom of back-number air that lurked in the ship, and replace it with nice, warm, clean atmosphere.

That did it.

Life at sea was no novelty to the Digger, but he had never yet wallowed in the luxury of a Thermo-tank, so he immediately went to the ticket agent's lair that stood beside the model, and bought second-cabin passages for his wife and himself on the steamer that was to leave England on 3rd May, 1911.

On that date the ship sailed, and when she was fairly at sea I (the Digger) descended to our cabin and unpacked my kit. The cabin was an "inside" one, but that, presumably, was no disadvantage as the Thermo-tank would see to the proper temperature and purity of the atmosphere. However, the air seemed to me a trifle sultry so, happening to have a thermometer in my baggage, I got it out and hung it on a clothes hook. It registered 82° Fahr.; at eleven o'clock when I turned in it indicated 83°; at dawn it

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was 84°. The following day the thermometer exhibited similar readings, so the bedroom steward was interviewed, and he explained that every watch of the engine-room staff had endeavoured to crank-up the old tank (or words to that effect) but had failed. On the third day the passengers unanimously registered a kick with the Purser, and, as many of them had been rendered seriously ill by the stifling heat of the cabins, the ship's doctor issued an order that those passengers who wished to do so were to be permitted to carry their bed-clothes on deck, and to sleep there. They nearly all took advantage of this order, and for the rest of the voyage the decks, at night, resembled a battle-field in Flanders.

Doubtless the Thermo-tank system is an excellent one, and probably, to-day, it works without a hitch, but we had bad luck.

All sea experiences are much alike, and have been described tens of thousands of times, so only two or three incidents which may be deemed characteristic of the sailorman will be related here; they pertain to a previous voyage. It was on a Cape liner, south of Madeira; the passengers were gathered after dinner in the music-room; of pianists who could play an accompaniment there were many. Sea songs having rousing and easy choruses were the favourites: *A Life on the Ocean Wave*, *Hymn for those at Sea*, *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*, *Tom Bowling*, and *Nancy Lee* went with a swing and enthusiasm expressive of the feelings of the vocalists who, for the past week, had been in touch with Nature's sublimities—the starry firmament, ozone-laden storms, the boundless expanse of ocean.

I felt that way myself. A fellow-passenger named Hornor whispered to me, "Say, let's go forward, the

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sailors are singing real sea songs in the foc'sle." We went, and lying down on the deck peeped over the side of the open hatch ventilating the crew's quarters. A sailor had just begun his song:

From Ushant to Gallipoli is five hundred leagues;
(*pitched a third higher*)
From Ushant to Gallipoli is five hundred leagues;
(*pitched higher still*)
From Ushant to Gallipoli is five hundred leagues;
Chorus.
(*pitched in many different keys*)
From Ushant to Gallipoli is five hundred leagues.

Then followed about three more verses; the words of each being exactly the same as those of the first. After an interval occupied by biting or cutting-off quids of tobacco, and replenishing the stove, the song was sung by another vocalist.

In those days, in the dining-saloon, the passengers occupied places at five or six tables, each of which was presided over by one of the ship's officers. I was at the Chief Engineer's table, sitting next to him. One evening he told me of an incident that had occurred that afternoon in the furnace-room. One of the younger coal-passers making his first voyage, on coming "off watch," set up a small collapsible music-stand, and placed on it a sheet of music. He produced a flute and began to play it with considerable ability. In less than a minute he was the target for every missile that his fellow-firemen could lay hands on: chunks of coal, balls of greasy "waste," oil cans, etc., drove him from the stoke-hole to his bunk. On the Chief relating this to me I expressed my astonishment,

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and said, "Why! I always understood that seamen were very fond of music, and I should think that a good flute player would amuse the men while at work." The Chief replied, "Oh! the music was right enough but the damned fellow was playing from note."

It was on the same voyage that two dining-room stewards were having a violent quarrel while washing up the dishes in the pantry adjoining the dining-saloon. In their anger they raised their voices so much that many of the passengers could hear their recriminations. Finally, one of the disputants hurled at the other an insult replete with the acme of scornful hatred; he thundered:

"You! you eat like a passenger."

Let us return to our subject. Five days after leaving England we steamed into the estuary of the St. Lawrence, four hundred miles east of the city of Quebec, and passing isle after isle at last lay-to opposite the quarantine station; here the immigration officials came aboard and remained on the steamer as we proceeded up the river. They established themselves in the saloon where each passenger in turn was required to present himself before them, and undergo a very searching interrogation. After waiting about two hours my turn came, and I faced the three officers; they were distinctly, but distantly, courteous although, as they shot question after question at me, there was something in their manner which seemed to suggest that if I should become a public charge I would be repatriated.

The immigration laws of Canada are, very properly, most stringent; some few of our passengers could not understand how such things could be, and applauded

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the sentiments of one gentleman from the Midland Counties when he said that being a loyal subject of King George he was entitled to go unmolested wherever the British flag was flown, and that Magna Charta made no mention of *landing money*.

After three days' steaming up the St. Lawrence we arrived at Montreal and warped-in alongside the dock; the customs' examination occupied but a few minutes, so passing through the dock gates, where our landing permits were exhibited to the policeman on duty, we entered the heart of the city.

I then tore up my landing permit.

We immediately made our way to the Canadian Pacific Railroad Station where I secured an upper berth in a tourist sleeping-car attached to the train leaving that evening. It was the only berth that had not already been engaged. The C.P.R. Company furnishes excellent meals in its dining-cars, but it is expensive for a Trans-Canadian traveller to avail himself of that service, consequently many people making the journey purchase from one of the many refreshment rooms in the vicinity of the station, lunch-baskets containing cold cooked meats or poultry, rolls, butter, pies, doughnuts, fruit, bottles of milk, etc.

In fact, Bret Harte describes the conditions of a similar journey very accurately indeed:

> Then rose, and checked her trunks right on,
> And in the cars she lunched and lunched,
> And had her ticket punched and punched
> Until she came to Oregon.

We procured a five-days' supply of eats (Canadian vernacular) and, as the time of departure approached, boarded our sleeping-car. It was filled with Nova

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Scotians who, having sold their farms in the east, were migrating to British Columbia where subsequently most of them re-invested their money in 160 acres of "rocks, climate, and scenery," as the wits of the Pacific Coast jocosely described the transaction. That year, 1911, there was a great stampede in Canada from east to west.

Sleeping-cars are divided into sections, each containing an upper and lower berth, each of them large enough to accommodate two persons. During the day the berths are folded back, making room for the four seats belonging to the section. Proceeding to our places my wife and myself took the seats belonging to our berth; an old Nova Scotian sitting on the opposite seat became very indignant, saying that he had paid his money for his berth, and that we should have to move on. As he was evidently quite unacquainted with railroad travelling—and many other things—I tried to explain to him, courteously, that I had paid for my half-section exactly as he had probably paid for his, and that neither of us had the right to monopolize the whole of the section. He waxed still more indignant and abusive, so I called upon the coloured porter to let down my berth, which was the upper one, and thus the old gentleman was effectually extinguished. About midnight we heard noises from the berth beneath us, and rightly concluded that our friend was having a supper.

The following morning, when the berths were folded back and the day seats arranged, we laid out our breakfast on the little movable table dividing each pair of seats. The Nova Scotian, who by this time had regained his temper, did the same; he produced the usual bottle of milk, a couple of bananas, and the ubiquitous American apple-pie—that inch-thick disc

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of pastry which is always sold on a dirty-yellow pasteboard plate. We noticed that about a quarter of the pie had apparently been gnawed away, and that its accompanying paper-plate was similarly mutilated. Our friend, seeing that my eyes were riveted on his pie, picked it up and examined it; a smile gradually oozed out on to his features, and he said, evidently thinking of his midnight supper, "I did think it tasted kinder tough."

After six days' travelling we arrived at the village of Tulameen, aching in every muscle. No matter how comfortable and easy-riding a railroad car may be, the inevitable swaying, undulation, and vibration that the passenger is subjected to brings into play muscles unaccustomed to prolonged exercise; when they are overworked they complain. It is the same when a cavalryman on campaign has to change his own troop-horse for another to which he is unaccustomed; at the end of the day's ride he feels as stiff as a recruit does after his first day in the riding-school.

Tulameen is at the confluence of the river of the same name and Otter Creek; it is about twenty-five miles south-east of the town of Hope on the Fraser River, and about one hundred miles from the city of Vancouver. At the time of our arrival it had a population of about two hundred persons, most of them housed in old log-cabins which had been built many years before by the placer miners who, in the early days, had worked in the river, and its tributary creeks, for gold. In fact, it was one of the numerous abandoned camps which abound on the Pacific slope, and to which the report of the diamond discovery had started a miniature *rush*. It was a curious fact that most of the occupations and establishments were

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exactly duplicated; there were two hotels, two supply stores, two blacksmiths, two doctors, two justices of the peace, two livery stables, two barbers, and two runaway murderers.

Nobody in the place had even a rudimentary knowledge of diamond mining, and no one had ever seen a *rough diamond*. They had all staked-out mineral claims of fifty-one acres each, notwithstanding that the mining laws then in force did not provide for precious stone *claims* although they authorized the issue of *leases* limited to ten acres. Not a single lease had been applied for to the Gold Commissioner. The day after my arrival I met, on the trail, an old fellow named Dan, who enjoyed a local reputation as a prospector for rare minerals. We sat on a log to smoke, spit, and swap lies, miner fashion. Having bound me to secrecy, he whispered (there was not a soul within a mile of us) that he had found diamonds. I suggested that he should show me some of his finds. With some hesitation he placed in my hands a black-japan cash-box, in size about 9×6×4 inches, and produced the key. On opening the box I found it nearly filled with some pretty good quartz crystals which I scratched over, looking for the diamonds which were underneath, but I found none; nothing but six-sided pyramidal quartz. I asked, "Where are the diamonds?" Dan said, "*There* they are, the box is full of them."

An hour after that I passed some road-men at work repairing the trail. The boss of the gang asked me what I thought of the country, and said he had a diamond that he had unearthed a day or two previously, and that he would like me to value it. He put the stone into my hand and I placed it in my mouth without looking at it; it was the size of a small walnut,

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and felt rough to the tongue and gritty to the front teeth when they were pressed upon it. When a rough diamond is placed in the mouth it feels as smooth and slippery and hard as a piece of ice. I handed it back without looking at it, and told him that his find was worth, maybe, six or ten dollars a ton if there were enough of the stuff to justify work being done on the vein. He did not become angry, but his manner showed that he was not enamoured of a man who would meanly attempt to buy for a few cents a superb gem worth at least a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

On payment of five dollars I obtained from the Gold Commissioner a *Free Miner's Certificate* entitling me, for one year, to all the rights and privileges of a Free Miner of British Columbia.

At the supply store sufficient provisions for two persons for one month were bought; these consisted of flour, bacon, coffee, sugar, condensed milk, baking-powder, butter, cheese, potatoes, onions, dried apples, lard, salt, pepper, soap, matches, and tobacco. All this weighed 106 lb. and was the minimum amount that two prospectors would require for a month's trip in the mountains. Fry-pan, kettle, pick, shovel, gold-pan, and a pair of heavy blankets completed the outfit.

A fair wagon road runs westward parallel to the river, so a light two-horse rig was hired to convey us to Slate Creek, which encircles half the base of Olivine Mountain. We took possession of an old, abandoned, log cabin near the Creek and about five miles from Tulameen village; the remainder of the day was spent in picking "green feathers" (young fir boughs), which made a most comfortable bed.

Olivine Mountain is, at its base, washed on its

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northern and western sides by the Tulameen River, and on its southern and eastern sides by Slate Creek. Its summit rises 5920 feet above sea-level and is about 3000 feet above the two streams that nearly encircle it. From the top of the mountain there extends for over two miles in a northerly direction an intrusive igneous body of *dunite*, i.e. *peridotite* containing olivine and chromite only, as its constituent minerals; this body or *stock* has an average width of about one mile. It is surrounded by pyroxenite with which it gradually blends. The dunite and pyroxenite have been forced up through a series of volcanic rocks and argillites, said to be of Triassic Age. The Tulameen River cuts through almost the middle of the stock, exposing a section of about 3000 feet in height. The diamonds seem to be associated, not with the olivine, but with the chromite, and unfortunately this mineral does not here occur in masses, but only in grains, veinlets, and small scattered bunches.

Although it was the end of May, prospecting on the higher parts of the mountain was arduous work, as four feet of snow covered the ground, and only the pyroxenite portion of the stock could be examined, but as midsummer approached I was able to climb to the top of the mountain, which was of peridotite formation. Thence in a north-westerly direction there was a belt about sixty yards wide in which the out-cropping rock seemed to be somewhat darker than the rest; the difference in tint was not very noticeable, still I reasoned that the darker appearance was probably caused by the chromite being more segregated there than in other parts. I broke off as many samples as I could conveniently carry and returned to my camp on Slate Creek.

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A prospector is unable to carry with him the many appliances used in an assayer's laboratory, and therefore has to construct for himself such apparatus as will enable him to roughly determine the contents and value of his ore samples. The method I pursued was as follows: the ore was first broken into pieces about the size of a pea, and those which appeared richest in chromite were carefully pulverized, caution being observed that no crystals large enough to be visible in a hand-lens should be injured. The powder was mixed with three times its weight of carbonate of sodium, and placed in a crucible which was then luted with clay; this was placed on a mound of clay and entirely surrounded with an immense pile of dry, thick bark which was then ignited; draught-holes had been made in the pile during its construction. The fire was, when necessary, replenished with bark, and the heat was kept up for four hours, after which the fire was permitted to burn itself out. On the crucible being broken open it was found that fusion had been effected; the carbonate of sodium combining with the chromium of the chromite formed sodium chromate which, being soluble in water, was easily washed away. The residue was digested with hydrochloric acid, washed, and then carefully fed along the top of a slightly inclined sheet of glass which had been coated with a layer of lard. By means of a small stream of water the powder was then slowly and gently floated down the surface of the greasy glass plate to which any diamonds that were present adhered, while worthless material such as quartz, etc., was carried away.

If I am asked why diamonds show such affection for a greasy plate I can only answer, "Search me!" nevertheless, it is a fact.

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The glass plate was next placed in a white-enamel dish and heated till the grease, being liquefied, ran off the plate. Boiling water and a solution of caustic potash saponified the grease, which was removed by filtration and washing. The residue was found to contain two minute diamonds, a small slither of peridote (a semi-precious crystal), a speck of gold, a visible flake of platinum, and some small grains of material which could not be identified.

By the end of the prospecting season I had obtained fourteen minute diamonds, the largest being, in diameter, about the size of a period used in the printed page. I had observed that the associated crystals of garnet, peridote, etc., were also exceedingly small, none of them approaching the size of those found in the alluvial diggings of the Vaal River in South Africa, so I formed the opinion that in the Mount Olivine stock the conditions of temperature, pressure, and rate of cooling of the magma, had been such as to produce only small crystals of the minerals contained in the igneous body which had been thrust up through the country-rock. It had been a saying on the Vaal River, "No garnets, no diamonds," so I echoed, "Small garnets, small diamonds."

Abandoning the hope of finding gems of commercial size, I turned my attention to the possibility of obtaining *diamond dust* which is used as an abrasive, and is the sole material which will polish the facets of cut diamonds. Its pre-war value was about sixty cents per carat, say $70 per ounce. Now, the discovery of diamonds in Olivine Mountain was made by the Dominion geologist, Mr. Charles Camsell, who afterwards became the Deputy-Minister of Mines of Canada. He sent samples of peridotite to Ottawa,

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where they were examined by Mr. R. A. A. Johnston, mineralogist of the Survey, who determined that the chromite contained over 6 per cent of the mineral diamond.

The extraction, on a commercial scale, of uninjured diamonds from the hard peridotite is a profoundly difficult problem to solve, and could be undertaken only by a company possessed of substantial capital. In the first place it was necessary to ascertain, by examining numerous ore samples, the probable amount of diamond dust contained in a ten-acre lease. With this in view I sent some representative samples of the rock to my agent in England, instructing him to obtain from any of the best-known assayers a quantitative determination of the diamond content; no firm in London would undertake the work; in Paris none could be found, and finally Germany was tried, but without success. At last, one of the leading analysts in London suggested that application should be made to a certain scientist whose reputation is world-wide, so my agent went to see him. The great man examined the sample through a lens and stated that he would make the analysis, that his fee would be fifty guineas, and that his certificate must *not* be used for the purpose of interesting capitalists in any mining undertaking!

His terms were declined.

I wonder whether the scientific world knows the reason why commercial assays are made?

William J. Locke makes one of his characters say, "He always knew that eddication affected the brain."

During my search for diamonds I had obtained 113 grains of platinum which I sold for seven dollars to the Geological Museum at Ottawa. The Tulameen River had been worked for gold by placer miners

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for half a century, and in the early days the old-timers had found a considerable amount of platinum mixed with the black-sand when they cleaned-up their rockers and sluice-boxes; they called it "White gold." Many of them grumbled at the "Pesky stuff," as it retarded the process of panning-out the gold; others would put it on one side realizing that it had at least some value, and that eventually some one might come along and buy it. After a while the storekeepers began buying it for fifty cents an ounce. The crude (native) metal was about 70 per cent fine.

[In 1918 the value was 110 dollars an ounce.]

Placer mining had, for some years, been abandoned on the Tulameen when I arrived there, so the following spring I decided to try whether it would pay to work the river for platinum, as the value of the metal had risen to about thirty dollars an ounce.

The placer miner—the alluvial digger—is rapidly disappearing, the world obtaining its gold supply chiefly from quartz veins, conglomerates, dioritic rocks, etc., discovered by the *hard-rock* prospector. It may therefore be of interest if the methods of the old placer miner be described.

The prospector, selecting the stream he intends to examine, works his way leisurely up it, and through the tributary gulches and creek beds; panning the sand and gravel, and the contents of all cracks and crevices in the bedrock that he may encounter, and studying the banks and beds of gravel for indications of *black-sand* (magnetic iron) and pay-dirt carrying specks or scales of gold. When he strikes a streak of pay he begins working either with a *rocker* or, if there be sufficient fall of water from any lateral stream, with sluice-boxes. When there is not much water, or not

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enough fall to make sluice-boxes practicable, the rocker, perforce, must be used, notwithstanding that the work is more laborious and very much slower.

The rocker somewhat resembles a baby's cradle. The box may be about 40 inches long by 20 inches wide, and from 12 to 14 inches at the highest part and 8 inches at the lowest. On this rests a hopper-frame, 20 inches square and 4 inches deep, having a thin sheet-iron bottom perforated with ½-inch holes. Under the hopper there is an inclined canvas apron and across the bottom of the rocker, inside, three or four ½-inch riffles (strips of wood) are fastened.

The pay-dirt is shovelled into the hopper, and then water is ladled into it by the right hand while the left hand rocks the box which has rockers under it. The hopper retains the larger stones, the remainder passing through its perforated bottom falls on the apron which carries it to the head of the rocker-bottom whence it is washed down to the tail end, where most of it escapes through an opening left for the purpose. The black-sand, gold, and platinum (if any) catch in the tag of the apron and behind the riffles; at the end of the day's work these minerals are transferred to a gold pan for separation.

A sluice-box consists of three boards each twelve feet long and one foot wide; one board forms the bottom and the other two the sides of the box; it is set at a grade so that the head is about six inches higher than the foot; this gives to the water running through it a current sufficiently swift to carry with it all the stones, sand, and debris that have been shovelled into the head of the box. The bottom is armed with riffles made by framing together, lengthways, four or five green wands or sticks, four feet long; the gold and

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black-sand, being heavier than pebbles and stones, gravitate on to these riffles and get caught in the interstices between the sticks; this pattern is called *pole-riffle*. Some miners prefer a frame with short slats running laterally, something like a miniature Venetian blind; these are known as *Hungarian riffles*. It really does not matter much which kind is used as it is no trick at all to catch gold, provided it is ordinarily coarse. (On the Fraser River, where the gold is in excessively minute scales, it is a different story: but of this anon!) Generally two or three boxes are used arranged in tandem, but in favourable circumstances the leading box catches nearly all the gold.

A gold-pan, made of thin steel, is in shape like an ordinary milk-pan. The prospector puts into it gravel till it is about three-quarters full, and then entirely immerses it in water where there is little or no current; he holds it in both hands, and shakes and partially rotates it so that the gravel is given a circular motion; this precipitates the gold to the bottom of the pan. Keeping the pan beneath the surface of the water he holds it so that the outer edge dips downwards at an angle of about twenty degrees, and by a backward and forward movement causes some of the gravel to slide slowly out of the pan; he then brings the pan, still under water, to a horizontal position and repeats the process again and again, till all the gravel has, little by little, been ejected, and nothing remains in the pan but gold and perhaps a little black-sand, which may, after drying, be removed by a magnet, or even by gently blowing with the mouth.

At the beginning of June, 1912, we pitched our tent on a bench near the mouth of Bear Creek, which runs into the Tulameen, opposite the base of Olivine

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Mountain. Formerly the Chinese miners had worked this spot for gold; they had made no attempt to save the associated platinum as I found that the tailings from their sluice-boxes contained a considerable amount of this metal. I worked here all season with a rocker, and made *tucker*, as the Australians term a sufficiency of eats; when their luck is particularly good they call it *flash tucker;* when they make a mere living, it is just *tucker*. I worked there for two seasons and the best clean-up I made in one day was twelve dollars.

During my second season a Canadian, J.W., with his wife and three children came and camped next to us. They all (the word "all" is here used advisedly) began placer mining at the lower end of the bar on which I worked. J.W. was a good neighbour, generous and kind-hearted, and he possessed a sense of rectitude far above the average; he was as strong as two bulls. One day a forest fire started up-river, and a west wind carried it towards our camp; however, I was not alarmed as we could always make a dash down to the river, where we should be safe; besides, between us and the fire was Bear Creek, and further, to the west of that a strip of ground had been burnt-over the previous year. The fire could hardly jump the creek, so the wooden bridge that spanned it was, from its position, fairly safe. A large party of fire-fighters arrived, and in a day or two they got the fire sufficiently subdued to warrant their withdrawal. The boss of the party, however, feared that a strong wind might restart the blaze and endanger the bridge which had cost the Government a lot of money to build, so he appointed J.W. *Night-watchman*, and took his party back to head-quarters. About nine o'clock

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the following morning Mrs. J.W. came to our tent-door, yawning and rubbing her eyes, and said to my wife: "I've had an awful night of it; that husband of mine snored, and snored, and snored, and when I dug him in the ribs to make him stop it, he just grunted and turned over, and snored worse than ever. I couldn't get a wink of sleep all night."

Four days afterwards the fire-warden rode up; he looked at the bridge, and handing a slip of paper to J.W. said, "Sign that." J.W. signed and received a cheque for fourteen dollars. He never turned a hair.

During the winter we "holed-in," as the bears are said to do, staying in a log cabin at Tulameen village. The district has a remarkably severe winter climate, the thermometer, in the early days of February, falling as low as 28° Fahr. below zero. It is said that, one year, the spirit thermometer touched 56° Fahr. below zero, remaining there for an hour or two. The village stands at an altitude of 2560 feet above sea-level, which partially, but not entirely, accounts for the rigours of the winters.

Two of my neighbours had no prospect of obtaining work in the approaching spring, so I suggested that they should build rockers and try their luck on the river; this they did when the season opened; other men gradually followed suit, and eventually there were fifty men placering on the bars and benches of the Tulameen.

In the course of a year or two, as our part of the river became worked-out, J.W. moved his camp some two miles up-stream where he found some pay. One day when I was prospecting with a pan, I passed his claim, and he, like a good fellow, pointed out to me some pretty good ground about 200 yards from where

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he was working. I worked the ground with my rocker while he, having a good flow of water, used three sluice-boxes. One evening at clean-up time he shouted to me to come to where he was standing by his boxes. As I joined him he pointed to the leading box and said, "Look there." Such a sight! The bottom of the upper half of the box was completely covered with gold and platinum in a background of black-sand. The little gold nuggets jostled each other; platinum (which is always found in much smaller pieces than is gold) was there in beads and nodules worth two or three dollars each. I watched J.W. as he cleaned-up and weighed the result of his day's work—its value was one hundred and twenty-two dollars!

The next day his clean-up was fifty dollars; the third day about the same; the fourth day a trifle less; the fifth day it was forty dollars, and the sixth day a dollar and a half!

The whole week's work netted him three hundred and seven dollars.

The reason of this streak of luck was that the Chinese when they formerly worked here had, at low water, wing-dammed the river. A wing-dam is constructed by building a rough wall of rocks, boulders, etc., running lengthways near the middle of the stream; this is the *wing;* from the head of the wing to the bank a similar wall is built and the whole construction is chinked with moss, leaves, clay, and similar materials, rendering it more or less watertight. The water flows away on account of the bed of the stream being on an incline, leaving the gravels and bedrock exposed and comparatively dry, so they can be worked. It seems that the Chinese, unknowingly, built their wing right on the top of a large crevice in the bedrock, and

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thoroughly cleaned-up the stream bed on each side of the wing without suspecting that under the rough wall there existed this rich crevice. J.W., who was panning the gravel lying under three feet of water, moved one of the boulders that formed a part of the old wing, and thus uncovered a part of the unsuspected crevice. His pan told the tale, and a week's unalloyed joy followed.

In the pine-clad mountains there was a fair amount of game, consisting of deer, grouse, bear, rabbit, partridge, etc., and during the season mountain-trout and white-fish abounded in the river. Most of the miners owned rifles and occasionally a few of them shot at something, but my opinion has always been that you cannot, with advantage, combine mining with hunting. The game's habitat is round the summit of the mountains; the placer miner works in the streams at lower altitudes, so if the miner decides to replenish his larder by means of his gun he has to take a couple of days off. Of course, if he is located more than eight or ten miles from a store, it is a different matter, and it then pays him to kill his own food. Every girl loves a doll and every boy loves a gun; the passion persists, and nearly all men delight in shooting something, and that, I think, is partly the reason that a gun is to be found in every miner's tent. As a young man, in Dakota, I was passionately fond of hunting, and for some years spent all my spare time in shooting the game which then roamed the prairie in herds of immense size. One day I shot and wounded an antelope standing less than thirty yards from me; it turned its head and gazed into my eyes—from that day to this I have never touched a sporting gun. This happened forty-six years ago.

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Some of the miners, instead of packing twelve pounds of gun and ammunition along the trails, substituted a revolver or a large automatic pistol; I think that they were wise. I will here describe a little scheme which, when firing a revolver, we used in the Kafir wars in Africa. It is necessary to have a walking-stick, a sword, or a rod not less than two feet in length. Suppose it to be a walking-stick:

> Face the target standing "square-on," feet apart to give stability; with the left hand grasp the handle of the stick, back of the hand upward; tuck the other end of the stick under the right armpit; pistol in hand, wind the right fore-arm under the stick and rest the right wrist on the top of the left wrist; "consolidate the position," and you can draw a bead and steadily maintain it for any length of time.

Try it!

The Tulameen River had quite a reputation as a trout stream. City men from Vancouver, Seattle, and Tacoma would visit it for a week or so to enjoy the sport of fishing. Their advent was a source of great pleasure to us as they were so picturesque; they dressed the part, never forgetting one or two becoming trout-flies hooked into the sides of their cute little Fedora hats; they were equipped with exquisite appliances such as slim steel fishing-rods with nickel-plated reels, vanity-cases full of assorted artificial flies, and spring-balances no bigger than a fountain pen. And oh! those waterproof hip-boots. I detected one of these sportsmen making in a gilt-edged ledgerette a sort of double entry account of a four-ounce trout he had just caught.

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I have a pleasant recollection of one visitor who asked to be allowed to pitch his tent beside ours when we were camped at an isolated part of the river. He was an Old Country Irishman, a road labourer by profession, and every year he gave himself a two weeks' holiday for the purpose of pursuing his hobby, which was fishing. His equipment was a line, some hooks, and a little sack of coloured feathers. He cut himself a pole and went to it. Every afternoon he would return to camp with a sapling on each shoulder laden with strings of trout numbering, by actual count, from seventy to one hundred; these limits were never exceeded in either direction. As there were only three of us in camp, and although we ate all we could, we were unable to alleviate the plague of fishes, so my wife watched the trail, and every passer-by, prospector, Chinaman, and tenderfoot, had to submit to her enforced donations. Many a city visitor would return to the Tulameen hotel and proudly ask the daughter of the house kindly to direct the chef to cook "his catch" of speckled beauties for supper.

I hope I shall never again see a trout.

Reference has been made to "dressing the part"; it is convenient here to hark back to the year 1910. It was in London that my nephew exhibited a kindly interest in my yarns about life in mining camps, and he asked many questions which indicated a desire to learn the details of life on the frontier. One afternoon the dialogue took this form:

Nephew: "I suppose you wore a red flannel shirt?"

Old-timer: "Nope."

Nephew: "You had riding boots, I suppose?"

Old-timer: "Nope."

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Nephew: "But you must have had Bedford-cord riding breeches?"

Old-timer: "Nope."

Nephew (despairingly): "Then what on earth *did* you wear?"

Old-timer: "An old fur cap with lugs, a grey army shirt, an old pair of blue denim pants patched with yellow 'Old Chum' tobacco sacks, and shoes with plenty of hob-nails. When the water was warm, and the pay streak happened to be under one or two feet of water, I wore a shirt only; the sun blisters one's back if you work with nothing on."

My nephew said, "Say, Uncle Long-'Un (my Army nickname—I was six-foot two), let's go to the Euston Music-Hall to-night, I want you to see one of the turns there." We went. *The* turn was billed *The Miner's Dream of Home*. The back-cloth represented a scene of forest, stream, and mountain, and had a "dream inset picture" of the Houses of Parliament and Thames Embankment. Up-stage was a small camp-fire (gas, asbestos sticks, and red glass) surmounted by an eight-gallon cooking pot about the size of the witches' cauldron in "Macbeth." The Miner sat on a soap-box dozing over the cauldron while the orchestra played sob music; he arose and came down to the front where the limelight enhaloed him. Then I understood. Cowboy hat, red flannel shirt bared at the neck, Bedford-cord riding breeches, polished knee-boots, leather waistbelt with hunting-knife attachment; he had dressed the part. He had a good voice and his song was a pleasing one; something about "The bells were ringing the Old Year out and the New Year in."

That same month there was a Mining Exhibition

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held at Olympia. I escorted my niece to it. In the gallery there was a section got up to represent alluvial gold diggings; behind the rail dividing the visitors' passage-way from the show, there were three red-shirted, cowboy-hatted, demonstrators standing by a tub of water and a liberally "salted" pile of wash-dirt; one of them held a gold-pan, and at our approach prepared to demonstrate. We happened to be the only visitors in the gallery at the time. I saw at once that he really was a placer miner, as also were his two mates. Dropping into the vernacular I said, "Say, Pard, let me see if I can raise a colour?" "*Go* to it," he replied, handing me the gold-pan. I demonstrated to my niece, and producing a cigarette case supplied smokes to the diggers who, of course, invited us behind the scenes, or rather behind the barrier. There was an ungainly sluice-box, without any riffles, set at a grade of thirty or forty degrees (three degrees is ample), while a *scenic* stream of water which was represented running *up* the box from tail to head instructed the public how it is done. We walked over to inspect a square box which I guessed was the London carpenter's idea of a rocker. One of the red-shirted ones called out with sheepish amusement, "Oh! cut that out, Pard," but I was too much interested; I lifted the hopper and saw that the box was completely empty, it had not even a riffle; the bottom of the hopper-frame was of heavy boiler-iron and quite unperforated. I laughed until I was pink, and the three picturesque diggers seemed to enjoy the joke too. I said to one of them, "Say, Pard, what in Hades are you guys masquerading like this for?" "Five bob a day," he replied.

We descended to the ground floor to see the Kimberley diamond exhibit; here one of the demon-

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strators was a coloured man. I looked round for a swinging wire-screen apparatus which we use at the Vaal River diggings, and which is called a "Baby" after its inventor, a man named Bebe. Not seeing it, I asked the demonstrator if he had one there. He looked puzzled and said, "No, Sah! they don't let we 'uns bring 'em, but I've two at home with my old woman."

To return to Tulameen.

We were settled in our log cabin enduring the winter of 1913–14. At that time British Columbia was in the throes of ideas for the "betterment" of conditions in this old shop-worn world of ours. The most active accoucheurs and accoucheuses of this movement were the *Industrial Workers of the World*, the *Women's Christian Temperance Union*, *Suffrage Campaign Workers*, and *the Pacifists*—especially the *Pacifists*. When we made an evening visit to married friends our hostess would, invariably, wind up the phonograph, give the disc a helping push, pat the horn, and loose-off *McKinley's favourite Hymn*, *Snooky-ookums*, and *I didn't raise my Son to be a Soldier*. She would then insert a new needle and give a repetition of the last-named song. How she enjoyed it! Dear lady! she was wise to get as much pleasure as she could out of that record while the getting was good, for if, nine months afterwards, she had dared to play one single bar of that air, her fellow-sentimentalists would have tarred and feathered her.

Round the stove, in the bachelors' cabins, the most favoured topic of conversation was that bearing on the prospect of immediate annihilation of landlords, bankers, soldiers, capitalists, dukes, and similar vermin. One Pacifist, who had formerly held a commission in a troop of Canadian Cavalry, told me that the young

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men of the present generation were too enlightened, too intelligent to tolerate war, and that I would notice that the modern citizen looked on the soldier's uniform with more contempt than ever; and further, that any government that attempted to enlist fighting men would be "hurled," etc. etc. Our leading philanthropist dilated on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; but he had the saving grace of malice and was known to follow the boiling-oil school of thought, so his logical deductions were difficult to follow. A septuagenarian sage (who, by the way, had a notch on his gun) told us that God never intended that man should slaughter his fellow-man, and then he let off a catch-phrase which seems to be almost immortal; he said, "War is unthinkable!" I really believe that the old fellow invented it; at all events, I had never heard it used; but ever since the year 1918 it has been parroted by every tin-pot orator who can muster an audience. The politicians have, in late years, concocted a name for the man who won't swallow the silly lie; he is a "Mischief maker."

Thus raged the Reformers.

I chawed on.

Well, the winter ended, mining was resumed when —BANG! went the WAR.

The Ringmaster at the Ottawa circus cracked his whip and the poodles, faultlessly, went through their tricks.

The years passed, and though the price of platinum rose month by month till it touched $110 an ounce, the river was rapidly becoming worked-out, and it was difficult to find any virgin ground which would pay the individual miner to work with sluice-box or rocker.

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The river bars being tickled by so many picks had ceased to laugh platinum. At last, after placering on the Tulameen for eight years, my clean-ups had diminished to one dollar a day, not enough to buy tucker, so I declared myself a "Quitter" and in 1921 moved down to civilization—the city of Vancouver.

Vancouver City, built on undulating ground to the south of Burrard Inlet, possesses one of the most magnificent aspects in the world. Looking northward, from any part of the city, one sees majestic fir-clad mountains which remain snow-capped for eight months in the year; mountains gashed by sombre cañons, and glittering with waterfalls, rivulets, and brooklets. The inlet itself is very nearly landlocked and forms the finest harbour in Canada.

According to the census of 1921 the population of the city is 116,700.

For nine years my wife and myself had been isolated from the outside world; we were indeed Babes out of the Woods, and anyone who has not experienced similar existence for that length of time cannot possibly realize our bewilderment at the changes that had taken place during our absence; changes in speech, manners, ideas, methods of living, social customs—in short, in everything. It is true that the hymnals assert, "Change and decay in all around I see," and that the philologists insist that language is a living thing subject to constant variation, but very few persons imbibe these truths in their entirety; most folks shrug and say, "Oh, it will last a time, anyhow," and it is half suspected that at the back of the mind of Youth there is some doubt as to the validity of the hypothesis of mortality. Did not one Court divine, preaching when his monarch was one of

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the congregation say, "Yes, Your Majesty, we are but mortals, most of us!"

I walked along the two principal thoroughfares, Granville and Hastings Streets, and was amazed at the endless procession of electric street cars speeding like racehorses, their strap-hanging passengers tossing about like troopers of a camel corps at the gallop; there were automobile cars buzzing in swarms like hornets that had suffered the sudden destruction of their nests; traffic cops jerking white batons to four points of the compass, and up-and-down; policemen who wore on their left breasts a row, five inches long, of many-coloured ribbons, evidently those of war decorations, but so close together that even I, an old soldier, could not count them; and firemen, as efficient as any in the world, in natty blue uniforms and exquisitely laundered white shirts and collars. At the Fire Halls there are laundries fitted with electric smoothing-irons for the use of the men.

Granville Street is where the ladies shop, and it was there that I studied the fashions of the day. What I now record is not criticism but appreciation; I am no enemy of aids to beauty nor to modern dresses. I like them. I observed that colouring (and bleaching) was almost universal; there was no age limit, some was artistic and some was not. One lady, coming out of the Hudson Bay Company's store, stopped in the portico and powdered her nose, while customers, entering and leaving, perforce jostled her a little but none took any notice. The dresses were, I should say, about one-half the length of those formerly in vogue; inverted pyramids of sunburn were worn both fore and aft. Most of the younger women had hair blinkers over their ears. On the whole, I was pleased,

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as I could see for nothing all that formerly I had been obliged to pay the price of an orchestra stall to inspect.

In the late afternoon a street car jerked me to English Bay, the bathing beach of which Vancouver is so justly proud. It is less than a mile from the heart of the city and has been lavishly improved by the Corporation. There is a pier, arboured promenade, and concert hall, together with bandstands, dressing-rooms, tea rooms, restaurants, and beach stages where pierrots and other entertainers give performances. On the water there are rafts and diving platforms, and a life-saving boat is provided for the safety of the bathers. On a warm summer's evening thousands of people flock to the Bay to bathe, dance, and listen to the band concerts. Of course, the bathing is *mixed;* probably no other kind is known to the present generation. When I arrived at the beach it was thronged with bathers; many of them who had finished their initial swim were lying on the sand stretched out full length, while others who were about to enter the water carefully picked their way among them. The colour scheme was prismatic. A military band was playing; numberless dripping nymphs, sucking at ice-cream cones, sunned themselves on the warm sand, bringing back to me long-forgotten reminiscences of my early childhood.

Can you beat it?

It was about a week later that an old rancher from Saskatchewan approached me as I was standing on the Canadian Pacific Pier looking at the shipping in the Inlet. He told me he had never before seen salt water; poor Rube, he thought he was then actually looking at the ocean. He had arrived that morning and was leaving by the night's train. Suddenly he

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asked, "Say, where's the swimmin' pool?" I said I supposed he meant the bathing beach at English Bay. He said, "Yes, I guess that's it; I came to Vancouver on purpose to see it. How do I get there?" Being disengaged, I told him I would go with him, so we entered a street car which took us to the Bay. On leaving the car we walked about fifty yards, and crossing the road went to the baulstrade of the promenade overlooking the bathing beach.

Pointing, I said, "There it is, what do you think of it?"

"Gosh!!"

In Vancouver dancing is extremely popular with the young people, and dancing academies are located all about the town. The little cottage that we had rented overlooked one of these dancing halls and every evening from nine till midnight we enjoyed listening to the latest dance music, and looking at the graceful couples as they floated past the tall windows of the brilliantly lighted hall. One evening, as we watched, the lights were suddenly extinguished and all was dark for about ten or fifteen seconds though the music and dancing did not stop; then the lights were again switched on, remaining so for half a minute, after which another spell of darkness. This alternation of light and obscurity continued till the dance was concluded.

"The hussies!" said my wife.

However, we were subsequently told that all was right and proper; they were merely dancing the popular "Eclipse of the Moon" dance, or something of the kind.

We attended the *Orpheum*, the leading variety theatre of the city, and were astonished to find that

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in a single decade the quality of the performances had been so much improved. The modern audience, too, is far more tolerant in its ideas than was that of a few years previously; for instance: in one turn, which was most artistically staged, the scene represented the Gates of Heaven guarded by Saint Peter apparelled in orthodox robes, wearing a halo and seated on a low throne; his appearance was patriarchal. An applicant for admission arrived from Earth; he was dressed in cheap store-clothes and wore a bowler hat; with outstretched hand he briskly walked up to the throne and said, "Hello, Pete." The audience enjoyed the whole turn and no protest was made either in the house or by the Press.

Over our roof seaplanes daily reverberated on their way to enable the crews to detect any fires which might have broken out in the forests, at other times they patrolled the Straits of Georgia to intercept small boats engaged in smuggling opium and other prohibited drugs.

We were informed—but this is only hearsay evidence—that in the wealthy families residing at Shaughnessy Heights the younger daughters, when visiting their neighbours in the evening, would appear with pink knees decorated with painted butterflies. I am not interested in entomology but I should like, in the interests of truth, to have an opportunity of testing the reliability of what we had been told.

With all these modern wonders we felt as if we were meeting with adventures similar to those which might be experienced by our dear old friend the Man from Mars who dramatists, novelists, and spectacular astronomers, have introduced to our world.

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I soon found that to lead the life of a modern citizen, it was imperative that I should learn how to use the telephone; hitherto the conditions of my life had been such that I had never used the instrument; this may seem strange, nevertheless it is true. I was acquainted with two sisters, young business ladies, who very kindly undertook to instruct me. I told them that I wished to communicate with a Mrs. M. living in South Vancouver. One of the sisters, using her portable telephone, called up Central and got the necessary connection; she then motioned to me to take her place at the phone; following directions, I jammed the black stethoscope against my left ear and waited for the thing to say something. I was rewarded by hearing Mrs. M. whisper "Hello!" I immediately said, "Good evening, Mrs. M.," and bowed; shrieks of laughter from the two sisters rendered further conversation impossible. Now, as it's never too late to mend one's manners I decided that the next day I would go to the British Columbia Electric Railroad station where there was a public pay phone in a small booth that had a window overlooking the platform. This window gave me an opportunity of observing how other people behaved when confidentially conversing with the blamed thing. The first man nodded continuously; the second shrugged and afterwards smiled; a girl laughed, shook her head, nodded, and then made eyes; a third man jerked his thumb over his right shoulder; and an old lady drew, with her forefinger, an imaginary line from ear to chin.

Why should *I* not bow?

The population of Vancouver is more cosmopolitan than any I have ever seen: the British Isles, the

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Balkan States, Greece, Italy, the United States, India, China, Canada, Russia, Sweden, Japan, all are substantially represented. It naturally follows that every shade of religious error is in evidence; referring to the English-speaking portion of the community only, in the newspaper, *Daily Province*, issued November 5, 1921, there appeared sixty-five advertisements of different churches and religious organizations. Proselytizing flourishes, and any man with manners enough to respond gracefully to the greetings of a fellow-citizen who may be unknown to him will, in the course of a day's stroll, be enlightened as to many methods of climbing the Golden Stair; he will also be impressed by the dangers attending the open elevator shaft.

Richard A. Proctor has pointed out that the theologian, like every other man, is studying the Infinite, and when he has thought himself out, he can only acknowledge that he is always at last face to face with a mystery past his solution, and that: "Thought sometimes only helps us to pile up more figures on the recurrent decimal."

One afternoon there came to my cottage two young men who introduced themselves as Elder Checketts and Elder A., of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is generally known as the Mormon Church. Now, whenever the name Mormon was mentioned, I, in common with most people, visualized a grey-bearded patriarch sufficiently married, but unconvinced that one can have too much of a good thing. There my knowledge ended, so I was glad to seize the opportunity of learning something authentic about the Mormon Creed. The two Elders, whose ages ranged from twenty-one to twenty-seven years,

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proved to be very agreeable young fellows of exceptionally fine physique ; their educational attainments were those which one would expect, say, in a high-school student of three years' standing, and they had evidently received intensive training in the doctrine of their church.

The following is, very briefly, what I gathered concerning the history and belief of the Latter-day Saints :

In the year 1820 Joseph Smith, a country boy fourteen years old, while living on a farm in the State of New York received a vision and beheld the Heavenly Father and the Son ; he was told that he was the chosen instrument to assist in bringing about the purposes of God. Three years after this, a messenger from God, the Angel Moroni, appeared to Joseph Smith and told him that a book written on golden plates had, in former ages, been secreted near the farm, and that this book contained an account of the former inhabitants of America and the source whence they sprang. In the year 1827 the golden plates, together with two stones that God had prepared for the purpose of having the record translated, were given by the Angel Moroni into the charge of Joseph Smith who, by the winter of 1829–30, had completed their translation—this is the Book of Mormon.

This book describes how some of the ancient people of Jerusalem crossed the Red Sea in the year 600 B.C. and travelled eastward, finally, in 590 B.C., landing at that part of South America now named Chile. The centuries passed, there were dissensions and massacres, and in the year A.D. 400 the last of the civilized portion of the people had been killed, but not before Moroni had succeeded in safely secreting

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the historical golden plates in what is now the State of New York.

The Latter-day Saints are sincere and thorough Christians, believing in the whole Bible from cover to cover, and accepting each word in its most literal sense. They believe that all the authority of the priesthood of Aaron was bestowed on the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that the two American Continents constitute the Promised Land, and that it is there that the Zion of God will be built. Joseph Smith declared that the whole of America, from north to south, is Zion itself.

Formerly, polygamy was a recognized institution of the Church and was practised by many of the people, but in 1890 Church President Woodruff, in compliance with the laws of the United States, issued a manifesto prohibiting the custom, and ordering excommunication from the Church as a punishment for those members who continued the practice.

To me, the most remarkable feature of the Church is its method of conducting its missionary enterprises. A young Elder will be directed to proceed to, say, Canada, on a mission for two years. He receives no stipend and is required to defray all his own expenses, even his railway fare. In these circumstances he has to raise, as best he can, the necessary funds to enable him to undertake the duty; he may have to mortgage to the bank his little farm; his father or other relatives may supply the money; or perhaps he may have a little store of savings laid by. At all events, he will not let the opportunity of serving Heaven escape. After two years' missionary service, if he has given satisfaction to the Church authorities, he receives an

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honourable discharge, and *then* the Church pays his railway fare back to his native State.

In the world there may be men and women belonging to other churches and denominations who make such sacrifices; who have such unshaken confidence in their creed and such conviction of the sacredness of their calling, that they will accept absolutely no monetary recompense—but I have never met them.

Young Elder Checketts had mortgaged his farm to the State Bank to obtain the twelve hundred dollars that his two years' tour of duty would cost him. I asked him if he did not realize that this was a heavy handicap for a young man just entering business life, especially as during his two years' absence from home younger men who had not been called upon by the Church would be working their way into positions, and seizing opportunities that might have been his. He replied, "Oh dear no! God, to reward me, will make my farm so fruitful that all losses will be paid back to me tenfold."

I hope so.

In a community where there are so many branches of the Christian faith *esprit de corps* is very noticeable. A friend of mine had advertised a house to rent, and was called to the phone to answer some enquiries by a lady seeking a house, and who asked how she could get to the one that was vacant. My friend said:

"You go south down Keefer Street for a couple of blocks and turn to the left; you know where the Catholic Church is?" "I'm a Presbyterian," snapped the lady and she rang off.

Mention has already been made in these pages of the Fraser River where the gold, being small and scaly,

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is much more difficult to recover than it is in most alluvial deposits. It was in 1894 that we made our camp on the south side of the river, in the cañon which extends from Yale to North Bend. We were opposite Spuzzum, a flag-station on the C.P.R. In the 50's the old-timers took out a lot of gold from this part of the river, and for years after that the indefatigable Chinks (Chinese) worked the ground with rockers. To a certain limited extent the gold crop on the bars is replenished every year, as the spring floods raging through the cañon tear up the sand, gravel, and boulders lying on the bed of the river, and deposit them lower down stream. The distance they travel each year is governed, naturally, by numerous circumstances. The attrition to which the gold is subjected wears it down to the smallest and thinnest scales imaginable; some of it doubtless has travelled hundreds of miles since Adam was a little boy. The largest piece of gold I ever found on this part of the Fraser weighed only seven grains!

At my camp there was a small creek running laterally into the river; it had a heavy grade enabling me, by damming, to obtain a *head* of fifty feet, which gave a pressure of over 20 lb. to the square inch. I had 100 feet of 5-inch canvas hose with a 3-inch nozzle, so by directing a stream of water to the foot of a gravel bank there was dislodged a goodly quantity of wash-dirt which could be put through the sluice-boxes.

I used a string of six boxes, each 14 feet long and 14 inches wide; the bottoms were covered with strips of burlap well stretched, or "laddered," and fastened down with strips of wood; two inches above these were thin steel perforated plates. The gold, black-

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sand, and some of the heavier sand, would gravitate through the perforations, and the gold and black-sand would catch in the meshes of the burlap. In cleaning up, the strips of burlap were washed in a wooden tub of water so that all the black-sand and gold was collected in the tub; quick (mercury) was added and the whole thoroughly mixed; the gold and mercury, mechanically combining, formed amalgam; the black-sand was panned away, and the amalgam which remained in the pan was squeezed in a piece of chamois leather to expel the excess of mercury which passed through the pores of the leather. The amalgam would then have a consistency something like that of putty; it was placed on the blade of an old iron shovel, and held over a fire till the heat had evaporated the last trace of mercury, leaving the gold like a piece of sponge of a dull reddish-yellow colour.

Its value was about $17 an ounce; absolutely pure gold is worth $20.67 per ounce.

There were then but few white men working on the river, and my nearest neighbour was mining on a bench about three miles down stream. I always called him, as I do to this day, "Chum." He was in the heyday of youth, lithe, sinewy, and tall, with the shoulders of an Atlas. On Saturday evenings he would come up to my camp when we would sup, smoke, drink maritime fashion to "Sweethearts and wives," spin yarns, and sip the strong coffee that my wife would brew, till the break of day began to show above the tops of the tall pines and cedars surrounding the cabin. The world went very well then. He was *some* vocalist, too, and although a quarter of a century has elapsed since he sang it to us, the lyric of "Two little playmates" is still green in our memories. One line ran,

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"Oh, don't say that, my little pet," and even now my wife has no appellation for Chum but "My little Pet."

He was a frontiersman all right, living, when he had to, on dried salmon straight, but when the gods proved kinder he would display a nice discrimination in selecting from the menu at a C.P.R. hotel.

Rumours floated in that free-milling gold quartz had been found on Slate Mountain in Washington State, so Chum rolled his blankets, and explained that as he had only one sack of flour and that he would be located sixty miles from the nearest store, he would like to buy a second sack to take in with him. Had I a couple of dollars? I had.

There is no mining on the Fraser in the winter, so my wife and myself went down to San Francisco to nourish ourselves with strawberries and cream, Dago-red, and French dinners, which in those days cost twenty-five cents a head. While there I received a letter from Chum saying that a lady from the East, Miss Noble, was in San Francisco en route to Northern Alaska, and that she desired to hear something about gold prospecting; would we call on her? We did so, and after we had been entertained by her for some little time, the conversation, of which I have a vivid recollection, took virtually the following form:

Miss Noble: "I am going to Norton Bay, Alaska; what chance of success should I have in prospecting for gold?"

Myself: "Any experience in that line?"

Miss Noble: "No. What would you recommend me to do?"

Myself: "Any capital, or, as we term it, any grubstake?"

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Miss Noble: "Yes, a little; enough, I think, for a start."

Myself: "Well, Miss Noble, I honestly believe that your best plan will be to take your money to the Faro layout up the street; I know the house and you will there get a square deal. Wait till three queens are out, and put all your grubstake on the fourth queen; make it sudden death. Then quit. You may double your money or you may lose it all. If you try prospecting you will *certainly* lose it all, and have to undergo many hardships during the process."

Miss Noble: "Now don't talk nonsense like that, I an serious."

Myself: "So am I."

Miss Noble: "Then you think that I really shall have no chance in prospecting?"

Myself: "Well, Miss Noble, I see you have a large stock of energy and determination, so possibly, if you study the thing, learn what you can from other miners, and acquire some knowledge of the geology of the country, you will have as good a chance as many other prospectors, after the experience of a year or two."

Miss Noble: "Oh, no, no, no! If I don't strike it in one season, I'm through."

Eighteen months after this, I left Vancouver to go prospecting in Oregon. I intended stopping over the night at Seattle, so on my arrival at that station I left the train, and stepping on the platform was accosted by a beef-fed citizen dolled up to beat the band, hat slightly tilted, flower in the button-hole, heavy watch chain, and all the usual frills—oh, yes! and brown kid gloves. In America, the profession of Confidence-man is overcrowded but there is always room at the top, and in my hurried glance at him I perceived that he

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was not one of the crowd of underpaid employés in the business. The fellow certainly had his nerve with him, for his kid-gloved hand was extended towards me as he said "Hello!" Politeness costs nothing so I nodded and hurried towards the exit gate. "Here! hold on a minute, you don't seem to know me," he persisted. "Oh, yes I do, I know you all right," I answered, with just sufficient sarcasm in my tone to indicate that I was not in the sucker class. Then he unmasked that unique smile that is possessed by but one mortal on this earth—Gee-whiz! it was Chum—my little Pet!

Arm-in-arm we approached the exit, and it was there that I received one of the joyous surprises of my young life; you might have knocked me down with a crowbar, for there stood the lady that we had visited in San Francisco. "Why! Miss Noble," I almost shrieked as, bare-headed, I offered my hand. "No, not Miss Noble; Mrs. Chum," was the answer I received.

They took me to the hotel and we ascended to their apartments; there Mrs. Chum opened a large dressing-bag and extracted therefrom glass scent bottles, soap cases, glove-boxes, and shoe bags, all chock-full of gold dust; there were packets of official papers pertaining to mining leases, registrations of mineral claims, options, etc.

She had "struck it in one season!"

After passing three happy days at Seattle I prepared to resume my journey; at the hotel office I deposited the room-key and asked for my account. "There is none, Mr. Thompson," said the clerk. "How?" I queried. He said, "Mr. Chum has given strict instructions that you are not to be allowed to pay for

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anything in this hotel." "That so!" I mused; if only I had had an inkling that affairs stood thus, I might—but no matter.

When I arrived in Oregon I wired to my wife at Vancouver to rejoin me. On her arrival at Seattle, she, too, was received like a "Prodigious son and the fatted virgins," as a Siwash child, mixing allegories at Sunday school, once expressed it. All I know is that, three days after, when I met her at the railroad station in Oregon, she had acquired such a top-dressing of candies, flowers, and lunch baskets, that she was barely visible. She told me all about her reception by the Little Pet family, and I then asked her "How about that two dollars, any news of it?" "What two dollars?" "Why! that sack of flour; Slate Mountain, don't you remember?"

What wretched memories folks have nowadays.

It was about this period that I met a Mr. Chamberlain, who had just returned from a visit to Germany. He told me of an incident which is characteristic of the customs obtaining in domestic circles in that country. He called, at about ten o'clock in the morning, to see a Captain of a Cavalry regiment stationed at Berlin; he was received by Mrs. Captain, who explained that her husband had not left his bedroom, but he would receive Mr. Chamberlain there. The visitor found the Captain in bed, and asked him if he would accompany him on business to an office in the city. "Certainly, at once," said the Captain, swinging himself into a sitting position and feeling on the bedside chair on which his wife had placed his uniform neatly folded. But his trousers were not there. He registered surprise, then irritation, and glared wildly

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round the room till he caught sight of the missing garment hanging from a hook on the opposite wall. He sprang from the bed and stamped across the floor, saying, " Ach ! I have never such a house seen, I must everything myself do."

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Chapter II

FENIAN RAID INTO CANADA IN 1866—LIFE IN THE RANKS IN THE BRITISH ARMY—FENIAN RAID, 1870

The raids from the United States into Canada by the Fenians began on the 1st of June, 1866, when 1400 of them under General John O'Neil, a veteran of the American Civil War, crossed the Niagara River at Black Rock, two miles north of Buffalo, and landed on Canadian soil a mile below the village of Fort Erie. They occupied the village, requisitioning food and horses from the inhabitants; telegraph wires were cut and a part of the railway track was destroyed. General O'Neil, with the main body, then marched to Frenchman's Creek and encamped at Newbigging's Farm where they erected breastworks and dug trenches. Early the following morning they proceeded to Limestone Ridge, where they took up a commanding position, and at about eight o'clock they were attacked by the Canadians under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Booker, whose force comprised the Queen's Own Rifles, the York Rifle Company, the 13th Battalion of Volunteers, and the Caledonia Rifle Company; about 840 of all ranks.

At first the attack was attended with some success, but at 9.30 a.m., owing to a false alarm that a body of Fenian cavalry was about to charge, some of the Canadians commenced to retreat; disorder set in and all formation was lost. The whole column retired to

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Ridgeway Station, having sustained forty-eight casualties. The Fenians who had been in pursuit turned eastward, and proceeded to the village of Fort Erie.

At about half-past two in the afternoon Lieut.-Colonel Dennis, who was at the outskirts of the village with the Welland Canal Field Battery and the Dunnville Naval Brigade, formed up his small command of about seventy men, and advanced up the main street where he met a body of 150 Fenians, while the main body of O'Neil's forces was rapidly approaching. The Canadians fought very bravely for nearly an hour but were completely overpowered; six were wounded, thirty-seven were captured, and the remainder managed to escape in different ways.

By this time the U.S. authorities were taking steps to prevent any more raiders crossing the river, and several regular regiments of the American army guarded the border, and the U.S. gunboat *Michigan* patrolled the Niagara River, so O'Neil could obtain no reinforcements. Canadian forces—horse, foot, and artillery—were being rushed to the scene of action from Toronto and other points. O'Neil, recognizing that his position was hopeless, determined to withdraw to the American side of the river, so at 1 a.m. on the 3rd June he embarked in two canal boats with all the Fenians that were in the immediate vicinity of his camp. Before they could reach the American shore they were captured by the U.S. gunboat *Michigan*. There were many Fenians on outpost duty who could not be notified in time that O'Neil and the main body were about to withdraw from Canada; most of these were captured the next day by the Canadians, while others managed to get across the border in various ways.

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Throughout June, other Fenian forces threatened the St. Lawrence and eastern frontiers. On the Vermont border "The Right Wing of the Irish Republican Army" under Generals Spier and Mahon threatened invasion, and established head-quarters at Pigeon Hill, but the officers of the U.S. Army, acting under orders from their government, took such steps that the Fenians could not carry out their plans. At one point about six miles from St. Armand the Montreal Guides came in contact with a small body of Fenians and captured sixteen of them, who were sent to Montreal.

In September of that year, Head Centre James Stephens, who had escaped from prison in Dublin (by the way, men and women frequently escaped from prison in Dublin) arrived at New York, and addressed an immense crowd of his fellow-countrymen that had assembled in Central Park to welcome him. I happened to be staying at a New York hotel at the time, so, in company with two or three guests, went to the park to witness the scene. In those days every resident in the U.S. wore square-toed boots while, in Europe, round-toed shoes were in vogue. We had been in the park only a few minutes when we noticed that angry glances were cast at our English shoes, and the next moment there was a flash of shillalies as a rush was made towards us. We scattered and ran—how we did run !—and by good luck regained our hotel in safety.

I was a boy of nineteen, and taking the attack very much to heart was burning to fight back, so, praying that the Fenians would again raid Canada, I took the night train to Quebec, and going to the Citadel there became a British soldier of the Imperial Army.

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The Sergeant-major of the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own) handed me a shilling and demanded of me if I was willing to serve Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and her heirs and successors according to law, for a period of ten years? In conformity with regulations I was given forty-eight hours to think it over, and was then attested before a magistrate, and thus attained the rank of Private. In modern times the rank is "Rifleman."

The British soldier of the present century serves under very different conditions to those of his predecessor. At the period of which I am writing, the pay of the Infantryman was one shilling a day; his Army ration consisted of one pound of bread and one pound of meat, for which he had to pay to Government threepence. By a company arrangement the Army ration was supplemented by a small quantity of coffee, tea, sugar, vegetables, salt, pepper, and four ounces of bread (called "tea-bread"); for this the soldier had to pay about twopence-halfpenny. The other necessary expenditures consisted of: washing of underwear, about twopence or threepence a week; hair cutting, one halfpenny a month; library subscription, one penny a month; soap, blacking, and cleaning materials, about twopence a month; all these items amounted on an average to a halfpenny a day. It will be seen that out of his daily pay of one shilling, sixpence was deducted for his food, etc., so the maximum amount of cash that he ever received was sixpence.

Then, again, if any of his shirts, drawers, socks, or towels became worn out before his ten years' period of enlistment expired, he had to replace them at his own expense, and also pay one halfpenny to have each

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article marked, with indelible ink, with his regimental number and date of purchase; his daily pay was stopped till the account was paid. There was, however, a regulation that the man should be paid one penny a day cash, even if he were "under stoppages" for clothing that he had received from the Quartermaster's stores.

Once every three months the Quartermaster would inspect the company's quarters, and note all damages such as cracked window-panes, scratched paint, nail-holes made in the walls, etc.; these "Barrack damages" were charged against the men, who, strangely enough, regarded them as the gravest injustice which the soldier suffered; they were not, but there is no accounting for many popular prejudices.

Taking everything into consideration the young soldier, whose wardrobe was comparatively new, received for his services about fivepence a day clear (say, ten cents when serving in Canada), while the older soldier would, on an average, clear fourpence.

The military authorities possessed, however, a very pleasing sense of humour, though it was more of the practical joke type than that appreciated in civil life; they instituted a system of Regimental Savings Banks for the encouragement of Thrift. The interest was 2½ per cent per annum, compounded monthly. The Joker was this: A General court martial could order the confiscation of the whole of the soldier's savings that were in the bank. For instance: if a soldier were convicted of, say, striking an officer, or of "robbing a fishpond" (Fact, see the old "Articles of War"), the General court martial trying him could confiscate the man's savings!

What do you know about that?

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Personally, I considered the Post Office Savings Bank at Ottawa good enough for me, as I recognized the fact that we frail mortals may, at times, be tempted beyond our moral strength, and as perch is a tasty fish, there was no knowing what financial loss it might cause me.

It may safely be assumed that he exaggerates, if any man stigmatizes the "Soldiers of the Queen" as profiteers.

Reverting to my introduction to military life, I was served out with a complete kit: shako, tunic, trousers, two pairs of shoes, and a greatcoat, all of which the Government would replace when they had been in wear a certain length of time; I received also the following articles which, when worn out, I should have to replace at my own expense: Forage cap, shell jacket, serge blouse, shirts, drawers, socks, knife, fork, spoon, comb, razor, and brushes. The arms and accoutrements were: short Snider breech-loading rifle, sword-bayonet, cross-belt and leather pouch to hold sixty rounds of ammunition, waist-belt, haversack, and a knapsack which was of black canvas stretched on a light wooden frame about eighteen inches square and five inches deep, and which, when carried, was fastened tightly against the man's back by two straps passing over the shoulders and under the armpits; it was a regular man-killer.

In heavy marching order the total weight carried was about seventy pounds.

Fortunately, as a lad at school, I had gone through a year's course of squad and company drill, so the sergeant to whom was assigned the duty of converting me from a recruit to a duty soldier had to teach me only the manual of arms. He was a good fellow and neither

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abused nor bullied me; in a month or two he reported to the Adjutant that I was fit for duty, so I took my place in the ranks of No. 6 Company, which the men called the *Rocket troop*, on account of the company having had something to do with that weapon during the Crimean War.

Pseudonyms for regiments, companies, and individuals were very frequently invented by the British soldier; sometimes there was a tinge of affection, sometimes there was not. For instance: our regiment was called the "Sweeps" on account of the uniform being black; the 60th King's Royal Rifles were the "Cut-throats," as they wore red facings; the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers were the "Old Goats," because they had a pet regimental goat; the 28th Infantry were the "Old Brags"; the 50th Regiment were the "Dirty half-hundred"; similarly every man whose name was Murphy was called "Spud"; our Colonel was always alluded to as "Tartan" (why, I don't know), and one Sergeant whose name was Wilde was invariably dubbed "Jonathan"; he happened to be in charge of the Military Police. No. 8 Company "of ours," to which I was subsequently transferred, was known as the "Trimmers."

The Quebec Citadel, together with the walls and fortifications enclosing the city, was built according to a plan approved by the Duke of Wellington; its construction occupied nine years and it was completed in 1832, having cost seven million pounds. For thirty years it was regarded as absolutely impregnable, but by the end of that period military science had made such progress that it was deemed advisable to fortify the country lying to the east and south of it.

It stands on the summit of the eastern heights of

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Cape Diamond, at the confluence of the St. Charles and St. Lawrence Rivers, and at an altitude of 360 feet above the latter.

Our quarters were dark, uncomfortable, and insanitary, being long casemates built under the ramparts and accommodating a half-company, say thirty men. At one end was a door and two windows, at the other end there was a row of loopholes for musketry fire; these afforded the sole means of ventilation. In winter-time the door and windows were kept closed, so throughout the night the condition of the air was shocking. Imagine a hundred feet of the Metropolitan Underground Railway with one end of it bricked up, and with a door and two windows at the other end; this gives a fair idea of our quarters.

One day in the spring of 1867 a garrison parade was ordered as one of our men was to be decorated with the Victoria Cross. Most people understand that the Victoria Cross has been awarded only for an act of valour exhibited in the face of the enemy, but this was an exception. In this instance the act for which the award was made has been described as follows:

"On 9th June, 1866, at Danville Station, Canada, a freight car carrying ammunition caught fire. Pte. Timothy O'Hea, 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade, obtained the key from the non-commissioned officer in charge, and running to the burning car unlocked the door, entered the car, and single-handed extinguished the flames. For his gallantry on this occasion he was recommended for the Victoria Cross."

No one suggests that this was not a very brave act, and it must be freely acknowledged that the man was a real hero, but the country was then in a state of profound peace, there was no enemy. Surely some

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other way of honouring the man could have been found—the Distinguished Conduct Medal, a Commission, some honourable and lucrative appointment? In military circles there was considerable criticism, and many of those who wore the Cross which they had won in India and the Crimea, expressed themselves with much bitterness. Certainly, whoever recommended the award did not regard the decoration in the same light as did other soldiers. In Cope's history of the Rifle Brigade it is recorded that another Private of the same regiment was recommended for the Victoria Cross for saving the life of a child at the fire of Quebec!

De mortuis nil nisi bonum!

We marched down to the garrison parade ground, and were drawn up in quarter-distance column of companies; the 30th Infantry and some departmental troops were also present. The Officer Commanding the garrison calling Private O'Hea to the front, presented him with the Cross, and, as he handed him the papers authorizing the payment of the small sum of money that was annually made to recipients of the V.C., observed that they were the most important part of the award!

Poor O'Hea! a few months afterwards he was invalided to England and discharged from the Army as medically unfit for service. He went to Australia and got lost in the bush where, undoubtedly, he must have died.

Recently, in conversation with a Squadron Corporal-major of Horse Guards I mentioned the condition of soldiering in the Old Army, and gave him an account of the discipline that formerly obtained; he was

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astonished and said, "Why on earth did the men stand it?" Now, having been one of them I know why the men stood it, and will devote a little space to a description of the "it" and the "why."

In military language the appellation "crime" was used to describe any act prejudicial to military discipline: returning to barracks a few minutes after *Last Post*, failure to have a bit of soap in the knapsack when parading in heavy marching order, throwing a brick at the Colonel's head, shamming sick, being drunk, hocking your war medals, etc., all were "crimes." A man committing any crime was sent to the guard-room, where he remained till after morning parade; he was then "wheeled" before the Regimental commanding officer in the orderly room. He might draw anything, from a simple bawling out, to fourteen days' C.B. (confinement to barracks), or he might be remanded for trial by a Regimental, a District, or a General court martial.

Fourteen days' C.B. doesn't sound much if you say it quickly, but in reality it was a euphonism for a process which would drag the last ounce of vigour out of even the most robust "defaulter," as the victim was officially termed. In addition to his ordinary duties and company parades, he had to undergo an hour's punishment drill in heavy marching order, four times a day. The weight he carried was between sixty and seventy pounds. During the drill there were incessant orders, "right turn, front turn, left turn," etc., each turn necessitating the rifle being brought to a vertical position and then returned to the horizontal trail; this, alone, was a terrible strain on the right wrist. At the completion of an hour's drill he would have to clean and polish his accoutrements and pack, in

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readiness for the next hour's drill. At frequent and irregular intervals, between *retreat* and *tattoo*, *defaulters' call* would be sounded, and he would then have to appear with side-arms on the parade ground and answer to his name. He was not allowed to enter the canteen, nor, of course, to leave barracks. He was deprived, for three months, of the privilege of a pass permitting him to remain out of barracks after *tattoo*.

A Regimental court martial could award forty-two days' imprisonment in a military prison or in the provost cells; a District court martial could award fifty-six days, and a General court martial, death.

The Captain of a company could give one day C.B. to any of his own men, but this was seldom done, so the Regimental commanding officer awarded nearly all the punishments. I know of only one case in which a company commander exercised this authority; one of his men had neglected to tidy up his bunk or had committed some trivial fault, so the officer said "one day C.B.," the man said "thank you, sir"; he was sent to the guard-room, tried by a Regimental court martial for using insubordinate language to an officer, and was awarded forty-two days' imprisonment. His defence was that he was thankful to his company commander for awarding such a slight punishment as one day C.B., and that he had merely expressed his gratitude. The Court guessed back-chat.

Of the regulation horrors of imprisonment in the provost cells I refuse to write at length; that which degrades the individual degrades the race. Shot drill, semi-starvation, and the plank-bed, did their work. I have seen robust, healthy country lads enter the cells; when they came out eight weeks afterwards,

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they were wrecks. One of them was a man named Giles belonging to my own company.

But enough !—thank God those days are over.

Those were the days of hard drinking, and a good deal of it went on in the service, but not so much as in civil life, notwithstanding the contrary opinion universally held by the outside public who, after all, knew little or nothing of the Army.

Iron discipline kept drunkenness at a minimum.

When a man was wheeled before the C.O. for being intoxicated for the first time, he was "admonished," i.e. lectured, cautioned, and released. If, within twelve months, he was drunk for the second time he was awarded seven days' C.B. If, within twelve months, he was drunk for a third time he was given fourteen days' C.B. If, within twelve months, he was drunk for a fourth time his crime was "habitual drunkenness," and by the regulations he had to be tried by a Regimental court martial which invariably sentenced him to forty-two days in a military prison.

That a man was arrested for being drunk did not necessarily mean that he lay on his back wildly grasping above him feeling for the ground, nor that he insisted that on the following morning he was to be Queen of the May; it merely meant that a N.C.O. guessed he was drunk. Generally the guessing was good.

On joining his regiment the young soldier was always cautioned by his older comrades that he would find it the best policy never to maintain that he was innocent of any act with which he might be charged. If wrongfully accused it was useless for him to ask his comrades to give evidence on his behalf—they did not wish to become marked men. When a man was wheeled before an officer, a N.C.O. would state the

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offence, and the officer would make the stereotyped enquiry of the accused, "What have you to say?" However innocent the man might be, if he wished to keep out of trouble, he would reply: "I'm very sorry, sir; it shan't occur again." This soft answer would often turn away wrath, and the man would reap the advantage.

Experience convinced me that this line of action was the only one to take if a man hoped to be successful in Army life. If I had been brought before an officer and charged with swallowing the garrison flag-staff, I should have made the usual excuse: "I'm very sorry, sir, it shan't occur again."

These methods of enforcing discipline appear to the civilian "unfair," if not positively cruel, but it should be borne in mind that the soldier, necessarily, cannot retain his rights as a citizen, and that he must resign his liberty of action and freedom of speech. Writ large on the first page of his *small book* are the words: "Obedience is the first Duty of a Soldier," and he must make up his mind to abide by them; in fact, he would be wise to prefix to the adage the adjective *instantaneous*. Without the strictest discipline there cannot be that perfect cohesion between the men of military organization which imparts confidence and leads to success in the field. Insufficient discipline means in time of war disaster to the troops, while in time of peace it may—you know!

All my life I have pondered over a remarkable feature of the Rifle Brigade. The battalion being on foreign service, there were about thirty officers with whom we were brought in contact, and, with only two exceptions, they were regarded by us as being honourable, considerate, soldierly *gentlemen*. Many

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possessed the real affection—there is no other name for it—of the men of their respective companies. One of them who had been given the barrack-room sobriquet, "Played out," was especially idolized by us all; we would not have followed him into a hail of bullets, we would have got in front to shelter him—at least, that's how we youngsters felt about it. There seemed to be a feeling in the ranks that the officers, too, looked on us more or less as comrades-in-arms.

By the way, in the Standing Orders of the Battalion the following was one of the items: "The salute is a mark of goodwill and respect between two members of the same honourable profession; it shall be offered first by the junior in rank, and returned by the senior."

This is as it should be.

Extending westward from the Citadel, lies the historical table land known as the Plains of Abraham on which at 8 a.m., September 13, 1759, the French Army under General Montcalm was drawn up in line of battle to oppose General Wolfe who, during the previous night, had scaled, from the river, the heights, with a British force of about four thousand men. Wolfe fell mortally wounded while leading a charge of Grenadiers; Montcalm was also fatally wounded during the engagement, and was carried by his retreating men through the St. Louis Gate into the city of Quebec. To-day there stands on the terrace, on the verge of the cliffs just below the Citadel, a monument honouring the memory of these two Generals.

In winter the Plains and the surrounding country are covered with snow many feet deep, and, at first, a visitor is surprised to see in the distance columns of

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smoke rising apparently from the surface of the snow, but which, on nearer approach, are seen to proceed from the chimneys of cottages entirely snow-covered, the residents having shovelled inclined paths leading down to the doors of their homes.

About twice a week our regiment would parade without arms but with snow-shoes slung at the men's backs; the military snow-shoe is much stronger, wider, and heavier than that used by civilians. The streets, inside the city walls, were kept sufficiently clear of snow for traffic to be unimpeded, but directly the regiment marched through the fortified gates, and were on the Plains, snow-shoes had to be used. The formation was half-distance column of companies in single rank, extended to about three paces; every ten minutes the leading company was moved to the rear of the column, so the labour of breaking trail was equally shared. The thermometer would range anywhere from 20° to 30° below zero, Fahr., so on return to barracks, at the end of two hours, every man was ready to demolish his "pound and pounder," as rations were termed.

Stomach trouble was not a military ailment.

Once each season there was a regimental snow-shoe race over a measured mile, go as you please. Owing to my length of leg (a great advantage with the wide military snow-shoe) I came in a bad third, and a comrade who timed me said I did the mile in exactly eight minutes; nothing to brag about, still, there were six hundred men who did worse.

Reference has been made to the decision of the Imperial authorities to fortify the country lying to the south and east of the city defences. Three large forts were to be built about two miles from the Citadel, on

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the high ground at the back of Point Lévis on the south side of the St. Lawrence. In the early summer, our Battalion was detailed as a working party under the direction of a detachment of Royal Engineers to begin work on one of the forts. Full-dress uniforms and winter kits having been packed up were placed in the Quartermaster's stores, and the following morning we marched out of the Citadel headed by the band playing the regimental quick-step, " I'm ninety-five, I'm ninety-five." *Habitans* in homespun, nuns, priests, *calèche* drivers, and market women scurried out of our way as we marched down the narrow, winding streets flanked by convents, spired churches, hospitals, and residences, all of them roofed with shingles of tin which, at a little distance, gave to the city the appearance of fairy land. A steam ferry conveyed us across the St. Lawrence, which at this point narrows to 1300 yards, and passing through the village of Point Lévis we marched for about a couple of miles and pitched our tents close to the scene of our summer's work.

All military duties with the exception of those of a small camp guard were suspended. Every morning the men would proceed with picks, shovels, and barrows to the site of the fort where the Royal Engineers had erected profiles of scantling indicating the position where the earth-work was to be made. Each company was under the supervision of a N.C.O. of Engineers who kept tally of the work that we performed. At first it was arranged that, as a day's work, each man should pick, shovel, and wheel sixty barrows of earth for which he received ninepence as working pay, but after a week or two, when the men had toughened up to the work, it was decided that we should do the

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work of a day and a half each day, and be paid accordingly; so, thereafter we handled ninety barrow loads and received thirteenpence halfpenny. This arrangement was very popular with the men as it enabled them, individually, to supplement their scanty Army rations with some of the luxuries they had often heard of but very seldom seen: a man could have a little pat of butter added to his breakfast of dry bread and coffee, sometimes even an egg; a penny glass of beer with his dinner; a few onions, and perhaps a scrap of cheese, to eat with his quarter-pound of tea bread at 4 p.m.—there was no regulation meal between that and breakfast at 8 a.m. the following morning!

After all this extravagance he would still have seven or eight pence remaining to lavish on an evening's entertainment at the canteen where, over a pint of Canadian beer, and with unstinted pipe tobacco, he would be ravished by the music of the lyrics of our regimental poet.

Many regiments had pets: the Guards had a tame bear, the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers had a goat which, led by a drummer, headed the regiment when on the march, and so on. We had a pet poet; true, he had no gilded collar and chain for leading purposes, still, he had his uses.

This was his *magnum opus:*

> We are the boys in a glorious cause
> And our laurels never shall fade;
> Immortal fame enshrines the name
> Of the P. C. O. Rifle Brigade.

In the afternoons, by three o'clock, the day's work was generally finished as the tallying kept by the Sapper N.C.O. was rather perfunctory, and there

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seemed to be a gentleman's agreement that there should be no obvious shirking of work on the one side nor a rigid exaction of the ninety barrows of flesh on the other; this gave us an opportunity to visit the surrounding country, and to become acquainted with some of the French *Habitans* whose courtesy and geniality we found charming. Every house contained a violin and a large bunch of children, early marriages being the rule, and the parents were willing to leave to others the problem of feeding the human race in the year A.D. 2500. Holidays were numerous, as Feasts of the Church, which were most zealously observed, were of frequent occurrence. Since the Roman Catholic Church realized that its religious and civil institutions were far safer under British rule than they would be with the United States, the *Habitan* was powerfully opposed to the suggestion of annexation to his southern neighbours, and consequently our uniform was popular with them.

In the villages the people retain the language as it was spoken in France two centuries ago, but that added little to our difficulty in establishing a system of oral communication with them. We immediately perceived that the poor folk had not had the advantage of a London school course on French as had some of us, so we did not attempt to point out to them inaccuracies in their pronunciation—it would only have puzzled them.

Briefly, it did not take long for us to understand each other.

As a linguist I am admittedly a failure; I spent three years in Canada before discovering that the teamster's shout at his horses, "Oush-dah," was merely his direction to "Marche-donc," and similarly

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many years after, during the Klondyke gold rush in 1898, I found that the reiterated yells at the dog-teams, "Mush, mush, mush!" were again our old friend "Marche."

It was ten years after that, while living in Barcelona, that a Spanish señorita cheered me with the information that if I went south to the province of Andalusia I should there find my linguistic deficiencies no great drawback, as the Andalusians carried on most of their conversation by means of only the hands, fans, and eyes.

When the summer approached its end, work on the forts was stopped, and it may here be recorded that when Canada undertook her own defence in 1871, the forts themselves were turned over to her by the Imperial authorities, and ever since then they have remained unarmed.

Our head-quarters were ordered to proceed to Ottawa while a few companies, my own among them, returned to Quebec where we took up our quarters in a large barrack in the middle of the city.

In those days there were no County Council Schools nor even School Boards, so the soldier able to read and write was the exception rather than the rule; any young Private able to copy an Army form and count a score of leaves was certain to be offered the Acting-Corporal's stripe, provided, of course, that entries in his *defaulter sheet* were not too numerous. We had hardly settled down into our new quarters before I was appointed Acting-Corporal ("Lance" rank was unknown in the Brigade, that was left for "red soldiers"), and at the same time I was ordered to report at the orderly room as assistant to the sergeant in charge.

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It was here that I gained a knowledge of regimental returns, parade-states, orders, and the paper-work of the Army generally, that proved invaluable to me later on in my military career.

The Major commanding our detachment had served many years in India, and suffered from the usual after-effects of diseases contracted in that country—*bon-homie* is not one of them. There was a feeling that it was injudicious for any man to make himself too conspicuous when the Major was around. There was really no foundation for this prejudice, which probably arose from observation of the sudden spasms of pain that, in cold weather, would shoot across the Major's face; nevertheless, my pride at having secured a staff billet was tempered by the knowledge that we were bound to have cold days during the winter. We were all wrong; the Major was a soldier and a gentleman. Only once did he express disapproval of me, and that was to the Adjutant and not within my hearing; it happened that I had to go to the Town-major's office to obtain the garrison orders for the day, so putting on cap and side-arms I walked across the orderly room and departed on my errand. I was afterwards told by the orderly room sergeant that when the door closed behind me a spasm of agony crossed the face of the Major as he said:

"Eagh! his boots creak."

The Army had not then been reorganized on the Territorial system by which it was hoped that when a man wished to become an infantry soldier he would choose the regiment associated with, and bearing the name of, his native county, thereby encouraging *esprit de corps*. Some years afterwards we read that, in practice, the result was:

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They are swarming at the racecourse all as merrily as ants,
There are *Highlanders* from Galway, and *Northumberlands* from Hants,
There are warriors in petticoats, and warriors in pants
Combining to keep Christmas at Pretoria.

The Depot of the Rifle Brigade was at Winchester, so geographically it was a Hampshire regiment, but it was recruited largely in London, therefore its personnel was more English than that of most regiments of infantry of the line. We had a few Scots, and, of course, the ubiquitous Irish warrior was represented, though not to the same extent as in other regiments. The professional soldier was seldom or never a political partisan, and even his national affiliations and prejudices seemed to wane under the influence of Army life. It was owing to these conditions that in the Rifle Brigade there was but little manifestation of sympathy with Fenianism which was then rampant in certain parts of Canada.

There was, however, one exception that came under my personal notice; it was in the case of a very quiet Irishman named Mac—— who was an excellent soldier, clean, punctual, and inoffensive. One afternoon there came an unexpected order for the company to parade immediately with arms and accoutrements, and with ten rounds of ammunition loose in the pouches. We felt sure we were to meet the Fenians. Suddenly, behind me, I heard a clatter and crash, and looking round I saw Mac——, who had thrown his rifle and belts in a heap on the floor, standing with outstretched arms and clenched fists, choking with sobs, and shouting, "Never, never will I fire a shot against my countrymen." We all realized that that meant at least four years' imprisonment, and perhaps death for Mac——. I saw the sergeant in charge of

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the room leap through the open window, and run to the company parade ground where he assembled the men who were ready to *fall in;* a full corporal hurried to the far end of the barrack-room, and standing with his back to the commotion busied himself with ordering the few men in his vicinity to "Hurry up, hurry up, step lively now"; and I suddenly disappeared.

I learned afterwards that the men who had clustered round Mac—— threw water in his face, subdued his hysteria, told him that he need not shoot anybody but just fire in the air, adjusted his belts, accompanied him to the parade ground, and pushed him into a place in the rear rank.

Without doubt we N.C.O.'s were very lax in our duty, but, after all, there's a good deal of human nature in mankind.

It so happened that the company was not wanted for service against the Fenians, but only as a support to the civil authorities during a strike of shipwrights. We did not even leave the barrack square and in half an hour were dismissed.

In the spring of '68 I was promoted to full corporal and transferred to No. 8 Company—*The Trimmers*—which was stationed at Ottawa with the headquarters of the battalion. In those days the business portion of that city was little better than a collection of shanties, though the magnificent parliament buildings were sufficiently complete to enable the legislature to hold its sessions therein. Commercially, the town was a sleepy hollow for the greater part of the year, but in the early summer when the ice had gone out of the Ottawa River the woodsmen, who all winter had been cutting logs up-country, began to arrive on small

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rafts suitable for descending the upper reaches of the river, and which were called *cribs*. These French backwoodsmen were of splendid physique, and could perform stunts with the axe which, probably, no other men in the world could imitate. They arrived with six months' wages in their pockets, and were eminently successful in waking up the town, and gladdening the hearts of the storekeepers and saloon men.

The *cribs* were floated through the shoots running parallel to the Chaudière Falls and were then built-up into immense, strong rafts which were navigated down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to Quebec where the logs were loaded into the timber ships for export.

It was on the night of the 7th April that Thomas d'Arcy McGee was assassinated in the streets on his way home, after having attended a session of Parliament, of which he was a member. In his younger days he belonged to the Young Ireland Party, but he turned Royalist, and was elected Member of Parliament in Canada in 1857. When visiting Ireland in 1865 he strongly denounced Fenianism, and, undoubtedly, it was his antagonism to the Brotherhood that led to his murder. Ottawa was then without any uniformed police, the preservation of the peace being confided to Detective McNeil and one or two assistants. On the assassination becoming known some of our regimental military police were sent out in civilian clothes to glean what information they could, while the Government secret service agents worked so successfully that in a few days they were able to arrest a Fenian named Whelan, who was charged with the murder and lodged in the city gaol. He was committed for trial at the assizes where he was found

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guilty, and in due course he was hanged in the court-yard of the gaol.

From the day of his arrest to that of his execution a strong guard from our regiment was posted at the prison, and on the morning of the execution two companies surrounded the gallows in addition to the sentries on guard outside the walls of the gaol. The secret service agents of the Government had received information that, with a view to liberating Whelan, an attack on the prison was contemplated by the Fenians, but their plans were frustrated by the military precautions that were taken.

There were still a few veterans of the Crimean War in the regiment, old soldiers who knew all the tricks of the trade, and whose seasoned advice often assisted their younger comrades to "keep out of trouble." One of these, Acting-Corporal S——, was the regimental librarian who, by virtue of his office, did not sleep in the company barrack-room but had his cot in a screened-off part of the library; thus, in the evenings, he was not subject to the regulations of the barrack-room, nor to the supervision of N.C.O.'s senior to himself. Now, the dear old boy was fond of his glass; he took to beer as a Boston baby takes to rubber, but at the same time he could carry his liquor like a "Fine old English gentleman." Occasionally, in the evenings, he would take his walks abroad down town; on returning to barracks in time for *First post* he would sometimes have doubts as to his ability to walk with that steady, undeviating step which would carry him through the barrack gate and past the N.C.O. stationed there on duty to guess who was drunk and who was not. In these circumstances S—— would proceed down the side of the street opposite to that

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on which the barrack was situated and halt when he arrived abreast the middle of the gated archway. He would then face the gate, place his right hand grasping his *swagger cane* on his hip, and raise the tip of the cane till it came in line with some object within the barrack yard, exactly as if it were the foresight of a rifle with which he was taking aim; then he would march briskly across the street, left-right, left-right, keeping his alignment perfect, and maintaining a smart, soldierly gait till he gained the sanctuary of the barrack square from which he could slip into the library.

Poor old fellow! quite unexpectedly one ill-starred afternoon the *Alarm* and the *Assembly* sounded, so every man had to fall-in with arms and accoutrements on the parade ground. Acting-Corporal S—— was observed to stagger, and the charge "drunk under arms" was made against him. This being one of the most serious of military offences he was tried by court martial and sentenced to forty-two days' imprisonment. All the regiment mourned; in the whole battalion he had not a single enemy!

Every year, when possible, the regiment was put through a course of musketry, and those men who scored a certain number of points at target practice were termed *Marksmen*, and were entitled to an annual addition to their pay of one penny a day. During the summer the companies, two at a time, were sent to camp at the rifle range near the village of Aylmer, seven miles west of Ottawa. The course occupied about three weeks, which were spent very pleasantly. I happened to know a good deal about rifle shooting as during my school days I resided with my uncle who belonged to a Liverpool Volunteer Rifle

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Corps and with whom rifle practice was a favourite hobby. When I took my turn at firing on the range I rigorously disobeyed all the precepts that the Musketry Instructor had insisted on as being essential—I did not press the butt of the rifle forcibly against my shoulder, I did *not* use a fine sight, I did *not* press the trigger with the middle joint of the first finger, and I did *not* aim at the centre of the bull's-eye, consequently my score was the best in the company, and I was rated *Marksman.*

Of course, the sergeant-instructor did not even guess that I had not followed his directions, and I remember that he expressed his pleasure that I had profited so much by the training he had given us.

I know nothing of the modern fire-arm, but my experience with the Snider and Martini-Henry convinced me that, for good shooting, the rifle butt should not be pressed to the shoulder with such force as to tire the left arm and render it tremulous; the trigger should not be *pressed*, but *squeezed* between the thumb on the stockhead and the forefinger; and that a rather full sight which offers a wedge-shape to the eye assists in keeping the tip of the sight in line with the vertical line bisecting the target, though it must be borne in mind that to compensate for the taking of a full sight, a spot somewhat lower than the centre of the bull's-eye should be aimed at.

One Sunday morning while we were in camp a church parade was ordered, and all men belonging to the Church of England had to attend; there were only two or three men in the two companies who belonged to any other denomination. A lieutenant of the company to which I did not belong was the

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senior officer in camp, and was in command of the parade. He gave the usual command "stand at ease, stand easy," and began to read from the Church of England Prayer Book. This was quite in order, and in accord with regulations. However, after a while he closed the Prayer Book, and disregarding the Army rule that authority must not be abused, began to deliver a sermon, or discourse, of his own. The two junior lieutenants who were on parade turned their heads, looked enquiringly at each other, and then walked away to their tents.

Discipline compelled us to stand and take it.

I could not gather from the prattle of the preacher to which of the "Two-and-seventy jarring sects" he belonged; the goo-gooing of a new-laid babe would have been equally instructive. Probably he was not a Baptist for, "dressed in a little brief authority" as he was, he might have marched us down to the bathing-place.

Thank Heaven, he was neither Jew nor Moslem.

After talking at us for about ten minutes he suddenly ordered, "'Shun, right turn, dismiss." We went to our tents, and then the lid blew off. The tipsy half-breeds at Cape Town have a voluminous vocabulary of invective, but, that morning, our men could have given them ninety in a hundred-up and a beating. Each man felt that what was probably the sole right that he retained as a soldier had been trampled under foot—even convicts are protected from the forced attacks of the vicious propagandist!

The junior lieutenants immediately sent, by a servant, a letter to head-quarters; that evening the senior lieutenant was ordered to report at Ottawa, and a few days afterwards he tendered the resignation of

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his commission. Another subaltern who was in sympathy with him also resigned his commission.

In the summer of '69 orders were received for the regiment to move to Montreal, so one fine morning we swung out of barracks headed by the band playing "The Girl I left behind Me," and marched down to the landing-stage on the Ottawa River where we embarked on a river steamer which took us to a railway station a few miles from Montreal. We entrained, and after a short ride arrived at the Montreal station yard, where we formed-up.

Here occurred a trivial incident which, strangely enough, shaped the whole course of my future career. If it had not happened I should certainly not be writing these lines. The regiment was under the command of Major E. Manningham Buller, Lieut.-Colonel Lord A. G. Russell being elsewhere. My company was on the right of the line, and as one of our sergeants was absent, I was ordered to leave the ranks, and take his place in the supernumerary rank. The battalion moved off in column of fours, right in front; this brought me abreast of the leading section of fours, and three or four paces in rear of Major Buller, who was riding at the head of the column.

The boys were having a good time, surreptitiously blowing kisses to the girls in the windows and "rubbernecking" generally, consequently the dressing of the sections was becoming rather ragged; I perceived this, and as my temporary promotion to the supernumerary rank had naturally made me a little "duty-struck," I (quite properly) shouted the order, "By your left of fours, there." The Major heard me, and turning in his saddle looked over his right shoulder and

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stared hard at me. He wore a monocle. I broke into a cold perspiration, and wondered whether he would bawl me out right there, or have me attend at the orderly room the following morning. He very slowly turned again in his saddle, looking over his left shoulder at the column, and said very quietly, "By your left of fours, there." The order was repeated by the company commanders right down to the rear of the column. The sound of these lovely words soothed me as a cradle-song is supposed to calm a peevish infant.

The sequel to all this was as follows:

Our battalion was relieving the 60th Regiment (King's Royal Rifles) and therefore had to furnish details for the various garrison offices, stores, etc., hitherto supplied by the 60th. One detail was that of four N.C.O.'s as drill-instructors for the Canadian Cadet Military School. Major Buller was busy in the orderly room arranging the relief details, and (as the orderly room sergeant afterwards told me) asked the sergeant-major, "What kind of a drill is Corporal Thompson?" Now, as every one knows, a sergeant-major always has a reply of sorts ready for any question which may be asked him, so in this instance he answered, "He knows his drill all right, sir, but he has had no practice." For this wild guess he should have been sent to the bottom of the class.

I was sent for, and ordered to report as drill-instructor to Major La Branche, the Adjutant of the Cadet Military School. I did so; by a wonderful piece of luck it happened to be a Saturday. The Adjutant said that as it was about noon, it was not worth while to begin my duties on that day, and directed me to report at 8 a.m. the following Monday.

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What a piece of good fortune! How relieved I felt, because I, in common with nearly all soldiers, knew as little about drill instruction as I did about the differential calculus—less, in fact. Of course, we could all go through our drill satisfactorily enough, but when it came to telling another fellow how to do it, "That is again something else."

Returning to barracks I borrowed a *red book*, and commencing at the very beginning memorized as many pages as I was able till *Taps* sounded. At daylight Sunday morning I went at it again, and for fourteen consecutive hours I was oblivious to everything except to the imaginary recruit in my mind's eye to whom I talked about his feet, shoulders, eyes, stomach, chin, elbows, and fingers. By *Taps* I was letter perfect for about thirty pages. Of course, having a staff billet, I was exempt from all regimental duty.

At eight o'clock on Monday morning the three other N.C.O.'s and myself reported at the Cadet Military School. The Adjutant handed over to me about thirty cadets, telling me that they had only just joined the school, and instructing me to commence their training according to page 1 of the recruits' drill.

I raised no objection.

The training was intensive, four consecutive hours' drill with a few orders to "stand easy," so that the necessary rest might be afforded, and one hour's lecture in which we told the cadets how the wheels go round in barrack and camp. Thus, at 1 p.m. we were free, and I would return to my room and swallow as much more of the *red book* as possible. This kept me a few laps ahead of the cadets in my squad, and

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in a month's time I was master of the whole bag of tricks. I remember that one day I even discussed with Major La Branche some knotty point in battalion drill, and he agreed that as the text of the drill book was somewhat obscure, I might be right! (Twenty-four years afterwards I met the Major in Vancouver and told him what a horrible fraud I had been; he enjoyed the joke, and we became most intimate friends.)

Under Canadian law, every able-bodied man of military age was liable for service in the ranks of the Dominion Militia, but if he possessed a cadet-school certificate showing that he was qualified to perform the duty of a commissioned officer (under Field rank), or of that of any of the non-commissioned grades, he would, on being called up for service, be given the rank for which he had qualified. At Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto there were established cadet schools, at any one of which a young Canadian could undergo a ninety-day course of instruction in drill, etc.; at the end of that period he would be examined by the Commandant and obtain a suitable certificate. Each cadet was supplied with a suit of uniform, and was paid one dollar a day; he had to make his own arrangements as to board and lodging.

Most of our cadets were French-Canadians; they were courteous, attentive, and enthusiastic, so our relations with them were most cordial; I do not remember ever having to reprimand any of my squad, notwithstanding the severe physical strain they underwent in drilling for four hours at a stretch. Their great difficulty was to learn the bugle calls; indeed, some men never succeed in mastering all of them even after years of army experience. For instance,

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a lieutenant who for some months commanded my company in the Rifle Brigade was unable to identify many of the calls that were sounded when we were at skirmish drill, and consequently was at a loss as to the appropriate words of command to use. It was painful to observe his anxiety and nervousness; he was one of the most lovable and kindhearted officers in the regiment. When he happened to be near me and a bugle call sounded, I used to give its name in a stage whisper of ten yards' range, ostensibly to assist my left-hand man. It was very culpable of me to "talk in the ranks," but, somehow, the lieutenant never censured me, though, when we were skirmishing, he invariably took up a position pretty close to me.

As the time for the examinations approached, some of my cadets asked me if I would give them a private lesson on the subject of bugle calls. They paid me a small fee—I forget what it was—and after school was dismissed in the afternoon we proceeded to Joe Beef's well-known house of entertainment which comprised a bar, a lunch counter, a tame bear, a brace of barmaids, a cage of snakes, and other similar attractions. We took possession of one of the small supper rooms upstairs, and there I gave away to my cadets the secret of the soldier's musical memory; it was this:

Put words to the bugle calls. Here are a few examples:

CEASE FIRING.

Let 'em alone, let 'em alone. (In a monotone.)

THE RETIRE.

Right about, right about, right about. (Repeat.)

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DEFAULTERS' CALL.

Come along, come along, you're a damn fool;
Come to your Mammy, dear boy.

OFFICERS' MESS CALL.

Officer's wives get puddings and pies,
Soldiers only get skilly,
Officer's beer-money three-pence a day,
Soldiers only a penny,
Only a penny, only a penny, soldiers only a penny.

The plan was a complete success, and very satisfactory certificates were obtained by all my private pupils, not even excepting one who was as deficient of musical sense as was General Grant who, before becoming President of the U.S., declared that he knew only two tunes, "One was Yankee Doodle, and the other wasn't."

It was at this time that H.R.H. Prince Arthur—the present Duke of Connaught—was transferred from some Hussar regiment and joined our battalion as a lieutenant. A considerable portion of his time was occupied in the ceremonial duties of royalty at functions held in various Canadian cities, so his regimental duty was of an intermittent character. Only twice did my duties bring me into his presence; the first time was when I was taking round the book containing copies of the regimental orders for inspection by my company officers who happened to be, with many others, in the reception room of one of the married captains. My advent to the assembly interrupted an amateur piano lesson which H.R.H. was receiving from the lady of the house. The second occasion was when, one day, I was in charge of the

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outlying picket which all the morning had been patrolling the Montreal streets and which, as a check to insobriety, had, before dismissal, to be inspected by the subaltern of the day, who happened to be Prince Arthur.

"Your men's pouches are very dusty, Corporal," said H.R.H., whereupon I slapped the sling of my rifle (the salute of the short-rifle manual) and tried to register desolation.

Prince Arthur was much interested in the paper-work of the battalion and spent a good deal of time in the orderly room studying the various records and reports. When he finally left the regiment he gave to the orderly room sergeant, who was a chum of mine, an autographed photograph of himself, intimating that if at any time the sergeant needed any personal professional assistance, he might communicate his wishes to H.R.H. Several years after that my chum was stationed in India where the climate did not agree with him. He wrote to the Prince expressing his wish to be transferred to England; the return mail brought orders for him to proceed to Winchester, Hants, where, holding a commission, he completed some twenty-one years' service and retired on an adequate pension. He then received a very lucrative civil appointment in the Isle of Wight where his duties were far from being arduous. When we were in a funny mood we used to write and ask him whether he really had anything to do except to feed the donkey which was used to draw water from the well at Carisbrooke Castle.

Is it any wonder that we "Boys of the Old Brigade" held our officers in such high esteem?

As the winter approached it became known that

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the Fenian leaders in the U.S. were contemplating another raid into Canada, and early in the spring of 1870 the Canadian secret service agents discovered that through the winter they had accumulated at different points along the border sufficient war material for the armament of fifteen thousand men, and that Malone, N.Y., and St. Albans, Vermont, had been selected by General O'Neil as the bases of his military operations.

Early in April, the Government were in possession of information that an invasion by the Fenians on the Vermont border was imminent, so on April 11th a force of five thousand Canadian troops was called out for active service on the Province of Quebec frontier. However, as it became evident that the Fenians would not make an immediate attack, the Canadians were released from duty, but told to hold themselves in readiness to respond to any further call that might be made.

It was about the middle of the month of May that our regiment received orders to proceed on active service to the frontier. We paraded at 8 a.m.; our pouches were filled up with sixty rounds of ammunition; the extra musicians of the band were served out with stretchers, and revolvers and ammunition were supplied to the officers and staff-sergeants. It looked like business this time. We marched to the railway station and entrained, our destination being the village of St. John's (St. Jean), situated twenty miles south of Montreal and the same distance north of the U.S. border. Being a railway junction it formed an excellent base of operations.

Men belonging to various Volunteer corps arrived daily to join their respective organizations, and there

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were incessant drillings, parades, and general inspections, which kept every one on the move. Lieut.-Colonel Lord A. G. Russell, who commanded our battalion, was appointed Acting Brigadier-General, and Lieut. Prince Arthur was made his aide-de-camp.

There was a United States Vice-Consul stationed in the village, and one evening the U.S. flag which flew in front of his office was cut down by some mischievous imbecile. One of the ladies of the consulate declared that the man who did it wore a rifleman's uniform, so all our men who were not on duty at the time of the outrage were paraded for her inspection. She thought that she identified a certain corporal as the culprit, but she was most certainly wrong, as he was the last man in the regiment to do such a stupid act; in fact, he was one of my fellow-instructors at the Cadet Military School. Our Commanding Officer, Major E. M. Buller, diplomatically smoothed the matter out, and ordered that a sentry of ours should guard the flag from that day forth. It was probably some Canadian Volunteer Rifleman who was guilty, as the Regular British soldier really took no interest in international prejudices and jealousies.

On the Queen's birthday, the 24th of May, the garrison was reinforced from Montreal by some companies of Canadian troops belonging to the Prince of Wales' Rifles, the 5th Royals, and the Hochelaga Light Infantry. There were also in camp the St. John's Garrison Battery of Artillery, and the Richelieu Light Infantry; a detachment of the latter was sent to Malmaison to guard the bridge over the Pike River, some fifteen miles distant.

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On that evening I was detailed for duty at the telegraph office to receive from the operator, and deliver to the Brigadier-General, any telegraphic despatches which might arrive for him. At ten o'clock the Morse sounder began ticking out the news of what had happened earlier in the day, and we learned that the move (as some hoped !) to transform Canada into an Irish Free State had actually begun. A force of Fenians under O'Neil had gathered at Franklin, Vermont, and about thirty-five Canadian farmers enrolling themselves as a Home Guard took up a strong position on Eccles' Hill; they were reinforced by some men of the 60th Battalion. Lieut.-Colonel Chamberlain who assumed command had a combined force of three officers and forty-six men of the 60th Battalion and thirty-five farmers; these were posted behind rocks, trees, and fences. The advance guard of the Fenians was on a hill three or four hundred yards distant across the U.S. border.

At eleven o'clock in the morning on May 25th the Fenian column advanced, and in a few minutes had crossed the boundary line; their advance guard dashed down the hill towards the bridge spanning Chickabiddy Creek where it was checked by the fire of the Canadians; receiving no support from their main body the raiders retreated to the shelter of a farmhouse and outbuildings where they were joined by the remainder of the Fenian force. Desultory firing was kept up by both sides all afternoon. The Fenian losses were five killed and twenty wounded.

In the course of the afternoon General Foster, the United States Marshal, arrived, and arrested O'Neil in the midst of his troops for breach of the Neutrality Act; he was taken to St. Albans where subsequently

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he was tried for the offence, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Reinforcements for both sides had been arriving hourly, but the arrest of their General disorganized the plans of the Fenians; the following morning they abandoned their camp and dispersed, leaving large quantities of arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, which were seized by the United States authorities.

At the same time that O'Neil was making his raid, another force of Fenians on the Huntingdon Border under Starr and Gleason advanced into the Quebec Province at the Trout River, fifty miles west of St. John's. They dug rifle pits and threw up breastworks, but on learning of O'Neil's defeat they retired to their camp on the American side of the border. However, early in the morning on the 27th May they returned to their chosen position in Canada. Their trenches extended from the river-bank to a dense wood, and they erected stockades and a stout barricade commanding the road leading to the position.

At about 9 a.m. a Canadian force consisting of the 69th Infantry (Imperial), the Huntingdon Borderers, the Montreal Garrison Artillery, and some Engineers, under the command of Colonel Bagot, advanced to attack them. The Huntingdon Borderers, in skirmishing order, advancing very steadily against the entrenched enemy, were received with three volleys which, however, did not check them; they approached within a hundred yards of the trenches when the Fenians retreated, and ran for the cover of some buildings in their rear. One company of the 69th Infantry then fixed bayonets and charged; this completely routed the Fenians, who raced back to the safety of American territory.

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Generals Starr and Gleason were, on the following day, arrested at St. Albans by the American authorities.

At many other points on the border bodies of Fenians had assembled for the purpose of invading Canada, but the arrest of their leaders was so disastrous to the cause that all military action was abandoned.

The leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood changed their policy, and thenceforth Canada ceased to be the scene of their hostile activities.

To every man of the Imperial and Canadian forces who served during the raids, a war medal and clasp bearing the date of the raid against which he served was eventually issued; no undue haste in distributing the decoration was exhibited by the authorities. I received mine on the 26th January, 1900—*thirty years after the raid had occurred*—and all the other men who happened to be alive received their medals about the same time.

Our regiment returned to garrison duty at Montreal in June, and being convinced that there would be no more active service, I applied for my discharge, to which, on payment of twenty pounds, I was entitled.

I received my parchment, and slipping into civilian clothes went with a comrade for a parting glass at Joe Beef's lunch counter. The young lady presiding there had, a few evenings previously, poured half a bottle of *Mother Seigel's Soothing Syrup for Infants* down the inside of the collar of my best tunic, under the pretence of sprinkling a few drops of scent in my hair, as I bowed my head over the counter to receive the oblation. I was in those days like a very young kitten—my eyes had not yet opened. However, our

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resultant feud healed by first intention and left no scar.

Although I had left Canada by 1872, an incident which happened that year may here be recorded. Lord Dufferin, coming over from England to assume the office of Governor-General, was on board a steamer carrying several hundred emigrants; it was his custom to go forward among them in the evenings, and dilate on the advantages offered to settlers in the new country to which they were going. One stalwart young farmer from the Midland Counties was greatly interested in these discourses, and would stand as close as possible to His Excellency so that no word should escape him. One evening Lord Dufferin referred to the hardships endured in England by a struggling man overweighted in life's battle by a numerous family, and pointed out that, "in Canada where there was land enough for all, and where the youngsters could assist in the lighter work on the farm, a man could scarcely have too many children"; thereupon the enthusiastic young farmer gave Lord Dufferin an approving and hearty thump on the back, saying:

"Right you are, my Lord, that's what I've been telling Emily."

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Chapter III

SIOUX INDIANS IN DAKOTA TERRITORY—SIOUX SUN-DANCE—LIFE IN THE U.S. ARMY ON THE PLAINS

Exactly midway between the State of Maine on the Atlantic and Oregon on the Pacific lay Dakota Territory, out of which the two States, North Dakota and South Dakota, were formed in 1889. In the early '70's it was exclusively the stamping ground of the "Seven Tribes" of the Dakota Indians, misnamed the "Sioux." In the whole Territory there was but one small town, Yankton, the capital, on the Missouri River, and that was in the extreme south near the borders of Nebraska and Iowa. Beyond Yankton the only white people residing in the Territory were the U.S. troops, the U.S. Indian agents and their employés, the managers of Durfee and Peck's trading stores, some railroad engineers surveying a route for the North Pacific Railroad, and a few trappers and wood-choppers who, being married to Indian women, were safe from molestation by the hostile Dakotas.

The way the Dakotas were given the appellation "Sioux" was this: when, in the early days, the French settlers and pioneers from the East met with the Algonquin Indians they asked them who were the inhabitants of the country further west, and were told they were the *Nadowesiwug*, which means "little snakes"—figuratively, cunning enemy. The French

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corrupted the last two syllables of the Algonquin word into "Sioux," and the name has stuck like a porous plaster for nearly a century. I have met men from New York who corrupted this corruption into "Sy-ooks."

In the Dakota (or Lakota) language their tribal name means "Ally," but though these Indians fought on the English side in the war of Independence, and also in 1812, it is doubtful if this is the origin of the name.

Up to the year 1862 the Sioux in Dakota did not exhibit any hostility to the whites, but in that year the Minnesota Sioux, alarmed and angered at the influx of farmers from the East into their country, attacked the settlers; much blood was spilled, but the Indians were no match for the whites with their superior weapons and resources, so they were completely subdued and thirty-nine of them were hanged on the same gallows.

The Dakota Sioux on learning what had happened to the Minnesota part of their nation became thoroughly hostile and continued so until the year 1877, when the U.S. Government obtained complete mastery over them.

When I struck Dakota in 1870, there was a string of stockaded military posts built through the Territory on the banks of the Missouri River; extending from south to north were: Brulé Agency, Fort Sully, Big Cheyenne Agency, Standing Rock Agency, Fort Rice, Fort Stevenson, and Fort Buford. At each military post the officers' quarters, barrack-rooms, and store-houses surrounded a square parade ground, and the whole was enclosed in a stockade ten feet high with two double-story blockhouses diagonally opposite

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each other, so that the musketry fire from one block-house would take care of the other two sides.

The traders' stores stood outside the stockade, but sufficiently close to it to obtain the necessary military protection.

Where there was a U.S. Indian Agency it had its own stockade, and was within a few yards of the military post.

The object of the establishment of Indian Agencies was to induce the Indian to be good, to keep him from going on the war-path against his native enemies, and to modify his hostility to the whites. The bribe offered was an issue, every ten days, of rations consisting of coffee, sugar, flour, tobacco, soap, salt bacon, and fresh beef. No doubt, some of the Indians in America were sufficiently tame to do a little farming, wear trousers, and learn some hymns, and it is to be presumed that with them the ration system was a success; but the Sioux was a hunter and a fighting man. With him work was absolutely taboo. It is certain that no Sioux warrior would, himself, carry the rations issued to him to his tepee from the Agency—say five hundred yards. He always made his squaw do it. When steamboat deck-hands have been unloading freight at the landing-place, I have seen the scornful expression on the face of an on-looking Sioux as he said: "White Squaws!"

Throughout the winter the Sioux would draw their rations, which were issued in bulk to a group of families, the squaws of which would do the sub-dividing. The soap was highly esteemed as it was used by the women to bray the pelts of the animals that had been shot.

The Sioux had no use for flour, but they found

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flour-sacking most useful. A squaw would take a fifty-pound sack of flour under her arm and go to the river-bank where she would rip it open, dump the flour into the river and, carefully folding up the sack, return to her pile of rations. I have seen this done year after year at Big Cheyenne Agency, D.T. The Indian Bureau regulations provided for the issue of so much flour to the Indians, therefore it was issued to them—*some of it.*

When on the opening of spring the snow disappeared from the prairie, the buffalo-grass would rapidly shoot up, and as it was splendid feed for the ponies they would quickly get into good condition. As soon as this happened the whole bunch of Indians (some thousands in number) would leave the vicinity of the Agency and resume their normal lives; going on the war-path against other Indian tribes, hunting buffalo, taking pot shots from the river-bank at the pilot houses of the river steamboats, annexing the scalp of any white man who, without exercising due precaution, went outside the stockade; in short, in doing their duty (as they regarded it) in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call them.

As winter approached and grazing became scarce, the Indian ponies got into such poor condition that the Sioux could no longer keep out of reach of the U.S. Cavalry accompanied with wagon trains of supplies, including feed for the troop horses and mules. Since 1868, when General Sheridan introduced the system of winter campaigning, the Indians could not, as formerly, establish their camps in permanent winter quarters far from military posts and be secure from attack; so when the first snow of winter began to fly, they would return to their Agencies, declaring

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that they would renounce the war-path and be good. Then the Agent killed the fatted calf.

When the Indians arrived at Big Cheyenne Agency for their winter sojourn they would pitch their tepees (wigwams) on a bench running parallel to the Missouri River and about five hundred yards from its bank, on which the Agency and the military post were built. A tepee consisted of from ten to twenty slender spruce poles some ten feet long, the butts being about twice the thickness of a man's wrist; the tops of these poles would be loosely tied together, and the butts placed at equal distances round the circumference of a circle of, say, ten feet in diameter; round this framework would be wrapped a number of skilfully brayed buffalo hides sewn together, a very small opening being left to serve as a door, while a still smaller one near the top of the tepee afforded egress for the smoke of the fire which would be lighted on the ground in the centre of the lodge. The fur side of the buffalo hides formed the inside of the dwelling, the expert braying of the skin rendering its outside pliable and nearly white, so that at a little distance the tepee presented the appearance of a canvas bell-tent. This arrangement invariably brought to my mind Brian O'Lynn's celebrated pair of sheep-skin breeches:

> The skinny side out, and the woolly side in;
> "'Tis cool and convaynient," said Brian O'Lynn.

In case of emergency, preparation for moving a Sioux camp occupied but very few minutes. The squaws would unwrap the buffalo covering of the tepee, fold it into a square pad and place it on a pony's back; on either side of the pony one-half of

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the bunch of tepee poles would be lashed, forming a pair of shafts, the butts trailing on the ground. A shallow basket or tray of netted rawhide fastened behind the pony's tail and between the poles, would prevent the trailing ends from spreading and form a receptacle for small pots, pans, babies, and other domestic trifles; the larger articles belonging to the family would be secured to the lower part of the poles; and finally the squaw would climb on to the buffalo hide pad. Such was the *travois* of the prairies.

At ordinary times the costume of the Sioux consisted of a breech-cloth, leggings of cloth or buckskin reaching to the upper part of the thigh, moccasins ornamented with beadwork and dyed porcupine quills, and sometimes a cotton shirt, the tail of which was unconfined; trousers were never worn by an Indian. Generally a blanket was used as a wrap; this was often ornamented with a handsome broad band of beadwork running the whole width of the blanket. On ceremonial occasions the headmen would appear in valuable and gorgeous raiment comprising buckskin shirt and leggings, ornamented with pieces of beaver skin of various shapes, and nearly covered with coloured beads worked in a variety of small patterns edged with strips of split porcupine quills dyed red, yellow, and green. There was a profusion of tassels of mink-skin attached to the outside seams of the leggings and of the sleeves of the shirt. The immense head-dress was composed entirely of feathers standing vertically ten inches above the brow, covering the whole of the head and spine, and terminating at the back of the knees.

When on the war-path, the only clothes the Sioux wore were the breech-cloth, a pair of moccasins, and

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a coating of yellow paint; those who possessed rifles had also a bandolier of cartridges slung over the left shoulder. One winter's evening I saw a war party of ten Sioux on their way to attack a camp belonging to one of their enemies; the thermometer registered only a few degrees above zero, Fahr., yet they were dressed exactly as I have described—there was not even a saddle blanket on any of their horses. Such power of resistance to cold seems very extraordinary to a white man, but the Indian's explanation of the phenomenon is probably correct—they say that their custom of living from childhood in a state of semi-nudity has resulted in their bodies becoming "All face."

Poets, novelists, and historians have made the world acquainted with the names of many of the Chiefs of the North American Indians, but it may not be uninteresting if a few names of some Sioux warriors of the rank and file with whom I have come in contact be mentioned here. Among them were: *No Heart*, *Hiding Bear*, *Spotted Hawk*, *Lone Dog*, *Young Man afraid of his Horses*, *White Bull* and two of his daughters named respectively *Pretty Mare* and *Red Foot*, *Rain in the Face*, *Crow Breast*, and *Lean Wolf*. One of the most influential Sioux Chiefs was *Spotted Eagle* (*Waumbolee Kalishka*), whom I came to know rather intimately through the good offices of Bill Fielder, the post interpreter.

It was difficult to discover how some of the Indians received such extraordinary names; many of them sound to a white man's ear horribly disgusting, while others are positively obscene. As a mild example may be mentioned *Smelly Foot*, and one Indian whom I frequently met was possessed of a name indicating

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a physical abnormality which cannot even be hinted at. The Sioux accepts whatever appellation has been wished on him, and apparently does not resent its use; however, he does not readily impart his name, even though it be of a complimentary character, to a stranger; considerable tact has to be exercised to discover what an Indian's name really is. Possibly the Ethnological Bureau has investigated and explained these features of the American aborigine, but I cannot understand them and merely record what has come under my own observation. However, I am convinced that the Sioux is not as sensitive about his cognomen as was the Englishman who applied for Letters Patent authorizing him to change his name from Joshua Bug to Norfolk Howard.

A frontiersman could in a very short time acquire sufficient knowledge of the Sioux language to enable him to converse with the Indians about everyday affairs, especially if he carefully avoided the use of the idioms of his own language while noting those of the Siouan tongue. In the matter of pronunciation there was little or no difficulty; the words, smooth and vocalic, were uttered deliberately and with pleasing emphasis on many of the syllables. The Sioux in colloquy does not use a profusion of synonyms or near-synonyms, and a single word is often extremely comprehensive, for instance: *Washtay* signifies good, pretty, satisfactory, palatable, excellent, etc., while its opposite *Sĕchee* means bad, disreputable, unlovely, corrupt, disagreeable, in short "N.G." The single word *How* is used both as a salutation similar to our phrase, "How do you do?" and as an exclamation expressing assent, approval, admiration, and satisfaction; where an enthusiastic English audience would shout

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"Hear, hear," and an American assembly would express its approbation by hand-clapping, the Sioux would say, "How! How!" In speaking of things the names of which had no equivalent in the Siouan language they would express themselves in words which would generally enable a white man to understand what they intended to convey; thus they called a Cavalry barrack a "Long Knife House" on account of the soldiers' sabres; a letter or a written pass was a "Speaking Paper"; and coffee was spoken of as a "Black Mystery." My experiences in boarding-houses in many parts of the world have convinced me that the last-named translation is particularly happy.

One afternoon I was strolling near the steamboat landing-place in company with *Spotted Eagle* and Bill Fielder the interpreter. Two white teamsters were engaged in a violent quarrel, and one of them excitedly exclaimed, "God damn your soul!" *Spotted Eagle*, in his own language, asked the interpreter to tell him what the man was saying and why he appeared so furious. Bill Fielder replied that he could not translate into Siouan the teamster's remark, as the Indian language had no equivalent for the profanity used in swearing by white men. *Spotted Eagle* persisted in his request to be given some idea of the import of the words that the teamster had uttered, so Bill said: "Well, that angry man is demanding that the Great Mystery (Great Spirit) shall destroy the other teamster and torture his spirit after he is dead." *Spotted Eagle* threw back his head, and looking down his nose glared at the teamster; his chin protruded and the corners of his mouth were drawn down to the limit as he said, with the utmost

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scorn: "Dog! If he wants the man destroyed why doesn't he do it himself?"

In the summer of '73 the post interpreter invited a comrade of mine and myself to accompany him to a Sun-dance which was taking place in the vicinity of Big Cheyenne Agency. At the time of full moon near the summer solstice it was the custom of all the Prairie Indians, the Tetons, to hold this dance as the culminating feature of the ritual observed by the youth of the tribe who when approaching manhood would, by fasting and meditating in solitude, seek to put themselves in communication with the Great Mystery, the Supreme Being. At the termination of the period of their seclusion they would appeal to *Wakanda*, the sun, to promote their prosperity through life, and protect them from the hostility of evil spirits. The ritual seemed to vary considerably with the different tribes, and the Sioux incorporated in their Sun-dance the torture feature by which the youths were initiated into warriorhood. Eventually the other tribes of Prairie Indians adopted the institution. On becoming a warrior, the Sioux would be entitled to speak in the councils of his tribe, to wear an eagle feather fastened vertically in his scalp lock, and to go on the war-path. In the event of his failing to successfully pass through the ordeal the wretched candidate ceased to be regarded as a man, was compelled to perform the menial work of a mere squaw, and was treated with contempt by man, woman, and child.

The Agency was surrounded by extremely hostile Indians, and in ordinary circumstances it was courting certain death to go more than a few hundred yards beyond the stockade, but when a Sun-dance took

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place the Indians extended inviolable hospitality alike to friends and foes who, however, if they attended the ceremony were expected to go entirely unarmed. Knowing that the safety of our lives was guaranteed by this tribal custom, my comrade, Bill Fielder, and myself discarded our arms, and mounting our horses rode some three miles along the cottonwood-covered banks of the Missouri, then striking westward we ascended the river benches and came to a large plateau on which was pitched the great Sioux camp accommodating fully twenty thousand Indians. The tepees were erected in the form of an ellipse about three miles in perimeter; in the middle was the *wachipi tepee*, or dance house, a large circular enclosure of cotton-boughs, outside which thronged the squaws and papooses of the various tribes, while inside was assembled the greater portion of the manhood of the great Sioux nation.

The afternoon air was heavy with the smoke of the camp fires, the effluvia of decomposing camp refuse, and the smell of *shongsasha* (kinnikinick) from warriors' pipes; the hot July sun scorched the few blades of grass which had escaped being pulverized by the hoofs of Indian ponies picketed by thousands over the prairie. The throbbing of the tom-toms, the ocean-like roar from the multitude of voices, and the barking of dogs filled the ear, while the eye was fascinated by the bright-coloured blankets of the squaws, the feathers and beadwork of the young bucks, the verdure of the boughs of the enclosure, and the crimson cloth streamers and gaudily painted buffalo hides which decorated it.

We dismounted at the entrance, consigning our horses to the squaws sent by one of the chiefs, and

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entering the enclosure walked to where all the warriors were sitting in a long open shed composed of brush and intertwined boughs. We were received by Chief *Spotted Eagle*, with whom we exchanged the customary salutation of " How, Koola," accompanied by a handshake. For our accommodation buffalo robes were provided at his side, and we turned our attention to the performance. It was the third day, and the last day of the ceremony—the torture day. During the two previous days the candidates for warriorhood, some eighty or ninety in number, had been continuously dancing from sunrise to sunset without tasting food; a little drinking water had been given them during the night-time which was spent squatting in the arena waiting for the returning sun to rise above the buttes on the horizon. In the forenoon, before our arrival, many of the youths had passed the ordeal and were now sitting, for the first time, in that part of the dance-house sacred to warriors, but there were still about twenty young bucks going through the final stages of the dance.

In the centre of the arena three stout cottonwood poles fifteen feet in length had been planted, to the tops of which were attached several horsehair lariats, the loose ends trailing on the ground; round the poles were hung bundles of porcupine quills, buffalo skulls, streamers of coloured calico, bunches of wild sage and of grass called *wachanga*, and deerskin sacks containing the implements of the *shaman*—in its Anglicized form this word has appeared as: Mystery Man, Medicine Man, Wizard, Conjurer, etc., but probably the first-named is that which best represents the Indian word.

A large band of vigorous drum players performed

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almost continuously while the young Indians, dressed only in breech-cloths, faced the sun and danced in perfect time to the barbaric music. The dance consisted in raising one foot high above the ground, the body being supported on the heel of the other foot, both knees bent, the body crouched, and the face uplifted towards the sun, on which the eyes unflinchingly gazed. At every fourth beat of the tom-toms the supporting foot was stolidly changed, the knee only affording such slight elasticity as was to be seen in the movements of the performer. At frequent intervals the dancer would extend his arm above his head with an appealing gesture, the palm of the hand turned towards the sun, and simultaneously blow a shrill blast on a whistle made from the wing-bone of an eagle.

It was most astonishing to see the young Sioux continuously staring with wide-open eyes at the brilliant midsummer sun; as an experiment I attempted to do the same, but in less than half a second I found it impossible, becoming, for some moments, temporarily blinded. Probably the explanation of the Indian's ability to perform this extraordinary feat is the well-known psychological fact that self-hypnosis will at times induce anæsthesia, and that the period of fasting and mystic contemplation that the dancers had recently undergone had rendered them highly susceptible to hypnotic influences.

At the proper time the Mystery Man advanced, and taking a dancer by the arm led him to the foot of one of the poles. With a scalping knife an incision was made under the candidate's right shoulder-blade, and through the exposed sinews a buckskin thong twelve inches long was passed; to the end of this a

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buffalo skull was fastened. The region of the left shoulder-blade was similarly operated on; next, an incision was made in the right breast and a thong, after being threaded through the victim's sinews, was fastened to the end of a lariat hanging from the pole-head. A second lariat was in like manner fastened to the left breast; the Mystery Man retired and the youth recommenced his dance which, however, was now altered in character. Jumping high into the air he descended, stiff-kneed, to the ground with a concussion that set the buffalo skulls crashing together, and elicited from the spectators approving shouts of "How! How! How!" The dancer repeated this several times with varying amounts of violence and at last, after a tremendous leap, one of the thongs tore through the sinews of his back and the buffalo skull fell to the ground. The "Hows" were now deafening, and an old warrior, to whose lodge the youth probably belonged, ran towards him and executed a weird dance of triumph, simultaneously uttering short, dog-like barks. Thus encouraged, the young Indian redoubled his efforts to rid himself of the second skull, but it was many minutes before he was successful; he was evidently suffering sore distress, and it seemed doubtful whether he had sufficient strength left to accomplish the task, but eventually the thong supporting the second skull broke away. Now came the most revolting part of the performance; running rapidly backwards till the lariats became taut, the young Sioux flung himself backward so that the weight of his body was almost supported by the thongs inserted in the incisions in his chest, without, however, any successful result. The third or fourth attempt was more effective as one of the lariats

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was seen to fly back like an elastic band, and the free end with its bloodstained thong fell in a coil at the foot of the pole. "How! How! How!" came from a thousand throats, the tom-tom players changed their measured beat to a furious thrashing of their instruments, old warriors ran joyously into the open, dancing and barking, while the squaws outside the enclosure uttered shrill cries and waved their many-hued blankets. But, still one lariat remained to be broken away and the youth's strength was fast ebbing; he staggered and swayed, and his head rolled from shoulder to shoulder; the cries of the spectators suddenly ceased and nothing but the monotonous throb of the drums broke the silence. In a few seconds he was seen to steady himself; he advanced close to the pole, and looking over his shoulder seemed to be estimating his distance, then with long, quick, springy steps he backed away till but little slack remained in the lariat, and finally, with a mighty spring into the air, he hurled himself backward; the lariat tightened humming like a bow-string, its lower end tore away from his lacerated body and recoiled like a whip-lash towards the top of the pole, the young Sioux crashed down on the dusty prairie huddled up in a heap—*A Warrior.*

Meanwhile two other young Indians were taking their turn to "Make a Roman holiday" at the other poles, and the remaining candidates were continuing the monotonous dance with impassive faces, weary limbs, and jaded bodies. The want of food and water, the hot July sun burning into their staring eyes, and the dust which arose from the parched prairie, had exhausted them to such an extent that it seemed almost impossible that they could pass through the

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final stage of the ordeal, but still they danced on to the rhythmic throbbing of the big Indian drums.

At times an old warrior would advance among the dancers and deliver an oration describing in short, fluent, perfectly emphasized sentences the various acts of bravery he had performed in battle; the history pertaining to each scalp-lock dangling from his belt and from the handle of his tomahawk; the many captures of ponies and squaws made by him when on the war-path.

Presently a party of squaws came into the dance-house carrying camp-kettles full of coffee and quantities of cooked meat for the refreshment of the spectators. One young woman handed me a tin cup half-full of coffee, and another presented a camp-kettle lid filled with pieces of meat which I supposed was venison; it was delicately fried and had a most appetizing aroma; taking a piece in my fingers, Indian fashion, I lifted it to my mouth, but instantly received a nudge from the interpreter who was sitting beside me; on my looking at him for an explanation he whispered "Dog," so the dainty morsel was quietly dropped behind my buffalo-robe seat, and a little ostentatious play was made with the coffee-tin to disarm any suspicion that the holiday feast was not duly appreciated.

Soon after this we bade adieu to our hosts and returned to the Agency. The evening gun had just been fired, and the Stars and Stripes were being lowered from the flagstaff while the drums and fifes of the Infantry played, and the Cavalry bugles sounded the "Retreat." Comparison of the military pageantry of the white man with that of the red, led to the thought that if the authorities at West Point

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ordained that such strenuous physical tests as we had that day witnessed should obtain in the examinations of young men at that academy, there would be but few candidates for army commissions.

The following year the hostiles withdrew from our vicinity; parties of white men prospecting for gold had penetrated into the Black Hills, the most cherished reservation of the Sioux; the surveyors of the North Pacific Railroad had invaded the Yellowstone country, and "Long Hair" (General Custer) with the 7th Cavalry was hunting trouble in the North, so Head Chief *Sitting Bull* collected his braves in a last, vain, attempt to check the extension of the white man's sphere of influence. Thus we were safely able to roam the bottom lands of the Missouri River in search of antelope, deer, duck, and prairie chicken, all of which abounded. Late one afternoon, after a long day's sport, I had dismounted, and while watering my horse at the river gazed idly at a small lodge of Friendlies camped a few hundred yards away. A party of squaws carrying water-skins and camp-kettles approached to get water for their camp; they were followed, as was customary, by two warriors armed with Winchester rifles hugged, Indian fashion, butt upwards to their breasts. Their duty was to guard the women from any marauding parties of the Crow, or of the Mandan tribes who might be scouring their traditional enemy's country for wives that they would not have to purchase. As the group of squaws neared the river-bank a young Sioux warrior, who evidently belonged to their lodge, sprang out from a patch of red-willow reeds where he had been hiding, and catching one of the girls, who pretended to run away, enveloped her and himself in the blanket he was

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wearing. A second and third girl were similarly caught by their sweethearts and installed in improvised, miniature, blanket-tents. The other squaws took no notice and sauntered on to the water's edge. Thus the young men and maidens did their courting; to get his bride the young Indian would have to buy her from her father, paying a certain number of ponies, but however mercenary the marriage customs of a people may be, romance *will* crop out. Notwithstanding the system of payment for a wife, a matter of eight oxen in Zululand, ten dogs in Alaska, thirty dollars in China, six ponies in Dakota, the same sweet old lies must first be poured into the willing ears of the maiden.

The water vessels were being perfunctorily filled, the girls chattering and laughing, the older squaws squatting on the sandy bank gazing dreamily at the "Big Muddy" (Missouri River) as it glided past like some colossal brown serpent, when my attention became riveted on one uncouth figure carrying a large camp-kettle in each hand and walking somewhat apart from the motley throng. It was probably the squalid dress which caught my eye; the short-sleeved, collarless, buckskin blouse and short skirt were, in spots, black with grease, and the moccasins were without the ornamentation of dyed porcupine quills and beadwork in general affected by the younger squaws; the face, too, had not received the artistic touches of yellow ochre and red lead as in the case of belles who had an inkling that the river reeds concealed young warriors who were interested in them. Filling the two camp-kettles from the river, the carrier turned and without pause walked slowly and alone, back towards the camp. Tightening the girths of my

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McClennan saddle I remounted, and rode from the watering place, being almost immediately joined by a sergeant of the Sioux Indian Scouts who had been carrying despatches to Fort Sully. As we overtook and rode past the solitary water carrier I jestingly intimated to the Scout that if he felt matrimonially inclined *there* was a bride who would not cost more than a well-paid Sergeant of Horse could afford. His startling reply was: "He's not a squaw, poor dog! He failed in the Sun-dance the year the Great Mystery sent us the locusts."

The physical endurance of the Indian of the Plains was perhaps the characteristic which astonished us more than anything else; in build, the Sioux were lithe and graceful, the men averaging five feet eight inches and the women five feet two inches in height. In the four or five years that I lived amongst them I never saw a corpulent man, and incidentally it may be added that in that length of time only two girls were met with who would be considered really pretty, according to our standard of beauty, and they were very young; hard domestic labour and the vicissitudes of a nomadic life speedily nipped in the bud any approach to comeliness.

It was the custom of the Dakota Indians to lodge their dead in the forks of the branches of trees if any grew in the vicinity. Close to the stockade of Cheyenne Agency there stood a rather fine tree which we very irreverently termed the Crow's Nest, and which was the last resting-place of no fewer than seven Sioux warriors. If no trees were available, a platform of sticks resting on four slender poles would be erected eight feet above the ground. The corpse would be

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wrapped in a buffalo robe and as, instead of a harp, a rifle and tomahawk were considered suitable equipment for the great Hereafter, these arms, and some cooking utensils also, were placed inside the robe which was then bound with rawhide thongs to the platform. In most cases the pony of the deceased would be led under the platform and shot, its tail being cut off and tied to the edge of the scaffold; on the top of all, two or three buffalo skulls were often placed.

Owing to winter storms, charging buffalo, and the rotting of the supporting poles the scaffold did not long remain standing, but it is remarkable that no renovation was ever attempted. In a few years there would be nothing left but some broken sticks, the pony's skeleton, and the warrior's bones and skull, the top of the latter stained with a red line by the pigment with which, in his lifetime, the Indian had decorated the middle parting of his hair; the paint penetrated as far as the interior wall of the skull.

Much has been written about the stoicism of the Indian and of his habit of exhibiting little or no surprise in any circumstances, but probably this is not entirely pose on his part. He has become so accustomed to meet with the white man's ingenious machines and apparatus which he cannot begin to understand (such as gatling guns, steamboats, sawmills, and telegraphs), that when another novelty comes under his observation he regards it merely as one more piece of the white man's magic, unworthy of further astonishment. If, in those days, an aeroplane had passed over Cheyenne Agency, or if a submarine had emerged from the Missouri at the landing-place, it would have caused no amazement to our Sioux; they

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would have taken it as a matter of course. One day I asked *Spotted Eagle* (Bill Fielder interpreting) how he accounted for the progress made by a stern-wheel steamboat that was coming up-stream towards us. After some thought he explained that the current striking the stern-wheel turned it round, and then, as the wheel revolved, the blades acted exactly as do the paddles of a canoe, so the boat was bound to go ahead. Marine engineering was no "Big Mystery" to my friend *Waumbolee Kalishka.*

It was the policy of the Indian Bureau to direct the Indian agents to proceed to Washington every year or so, accompanied by a dozen or more of the most influential Sioux Chiefs and warriors belonging to their agencies. The object was to impress the Indians by showing them how numerous the white men were, and what immense power and resources they possessed. The party of Indians would be taken through the big cities and shown shipping, manufactories, naval stations, military camps, arsenals, the Capitol at Washington, and the White House, where they had an interview with the Great Father, after which each man received some appropriate present; a tall black silk hat was more appreciated by them than any other gift, so the authorities invariably included a large number of these articles in the collection of presents that were to be distributed to each party.

It was in accordance with his instructions that Major Bingham, the Indian agent, one day embarked on a south-bound steamboat taking with him a party of about a dozen Agency Indians; on his return he told me of an incident which may be worth recording. One of the party, a Sans Arc Sioux, on the three-day

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trip down to Sioux City persistently occupied one seat at a window on the port side of the saloon, and when the party was on the train going to Chicago he would "stay put" in one window-seat on the right-hand side of the car, although the other Indians constantly changed their places from side to side as the train passed different objects which interested them. At last Major Bingham noticed this strange conduct of the Sans Arc and asked him for an explanation; the reply he received was: "You have often told us at the Agency when you were angry with us that you would speak to the Great Father at Washington through that wire hung in a line on those poles, and I am watching to see whether that wire really does go to the Great Father's ear." After that the Major constantly drew his attention to *the wire* (?) strung in the streets of the cities that they visited, and on arrival at Washington the wire running into the White House itself was pointed out to the sceptical Indian.

When the party returned to the Agency it was interesting to watch the Indians descending the gang-plank of the steamboat, many of them wearing tall black silk hats and gaudy blankets, while they hugged to their breasts their other presents consisting of tobacco, pieces of gingham, pocket knives, hand-mirrors, and pairs of tweezers; these last being invariably used by the red man in place of the safety razor of civilization. On their return to their own people did these wariors expatiate on the delights of travel, and describe all the wonderful modes of living and the resources of millions of white men that they had witnessed? They did not. Their lips were sealed as to what they had seen; not one word about their

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experiences ever escaped them, they knowing full well that if they followed any other course their influence with the other Indians would be gone for ever; they would be regarded as the crazy victims of the unscrupulous white man who, unknown to them, had administered medicine inducing hallucination and insanity; everything they thought they had seen was but the fantasy of a poisoned brain.

A very short residence in Dakota would have been sufficient to convince any impartial observer that the system of sending Sioux warriors on rubber-neck trips to the East was pure waste of money; however, since the administration of Indian affairs during the nineteenth century was a history of blunder after blunder this piece of foolishness was comparatively harmless.

In 1870 all the military posts north of Fort Sully were garrisoned by the 17th U.S. Infantry with headquarters at Fort Rice. The regular army was officered principally by graduates from the West Point Military Academy, but at the close of the war with the South, a great many officers of Volunteers who had rendered distinguished service in the field received appointments in the regulars, though the commissions offered them were generally of inferior rank to that which had been held by them during the war; generals became colonels, colonels became captains, and captains received lieutenancies. The commissioned ranks of the 17th Infantry were almost entirely filled by ex-Volunteer officers; there were certainly not more than two or three West Pointers in the regiment. As regards the enlisted men, the regiment was very much below strength; the companies were mere skeletons till in the autumn of 1870 a large contingent of raw

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recruits was sent from Covington Barracks, Kentucky, to replenish the exhausted ranks.

The officers, admittedly gallant fighters, were equipped with hardly enough professional peace-training to enable them to successfully break-in such a large body of recruits, especially as they had but few reliable non-commissioned officers; at all events that's how it appeared to me, so determining to market the military experience I had gained in Canada I joined up. My guess was a good one; the American drill, based on Upton's Tactics, was extremely simple; the only difficulty I experienced was in overcoming the tendency to draw back the right foot when presenting arms—a feature in the British manual which some men can never quite get over. The "Top Sergeant," 1st sergeant, within a week spotted me as an able assistant, so he walked over to the captain's quarters carrying the company order book, and on returning showed me a paragraph setting forth my promotion to corporal. Poor fellow! very shortly after that, he drank a little too much whisky, and under its influence confided to our 2nd Lieutenant that that officer was not fit to convey offal to a bear, whereupon he was tried by court martial and discharged with ignominy from the service.

His successor as "Top Sergeant" was of German extraction and his hobby was money-making; he would buy wild berries that the men gathered for him and manufacture them into excellent wine which he set to mature in bottles stored on the top shelf of the company clothing closet, and eventually sell it to the men at a high figure. One day some of the bottles exploded, breaking many of the others and ruining

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the new uniforms. The Court of Inquiry investigating the damage discovered that there was a shortage in the stock of uniforms, the sergeant had fraudulently disposed of some of it, so he was tried by court martial and sent to the military prison at Fort Leavenworth. He could have covered up this fraud in a month or two in a manner which will hereafter be explained, but unfortunately for him the premature fermentation of the wine spilled the beans. The discharge of these two sergeants made me, with less than two months' service, the senior corporal in the company, as in the American Army the system of promotion of non-commissioned officers was not a regimental but a company proceeding.

The officer commanding the regiment was Colonel T. L. Crittenden, of Kentucky, who had served through the war as a general in the Volunteer Union Forces. It must here be explained that in addressing officers it was customary to use the rank that they had held in the Volunteer service instead of that to which their present commissions in the regulars entitled them. On Christmas Eve a dance took place in our company barrack-room; the bunks had been taken outside, and as coloured-paper chains had been draped across the ceiling and quantities of lighted candles had been nailed to all the projections that presented themselves from the walls, the effect was good. Ladies being as scarce as hen's teeth at all frontier posts, it was, of course, a buck dance, which always strikes a visitor from the East as being surprisingly sedate and ludicrously ceremonious. The powerful voice of the "Caller" prompted the dancers: "S'lute yer pardners—Balance all—Do-se-do—Gents sashay—Al'man left—Swing—Do-se-do—All jine hands," and

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everything went merrily. Colonel Donovan, the captain of my company, beckoned to me and directed me to go to the General's quarters, present his compliments and say that the General's attendance at the dance would very much please the company. Many of the men were from the West and South, so if one of these had happened to be sent with the message it would probably have been delivered something like this: "Sir, the Capn's compliments and will you 'uns please come over to the dance?" Now, as I was working for promotion I determined to leave a good impression behind (like the old lady who sat down on an egg-crate bearing the freshly painted legend, "This side up, with care"), so when the General came to his door in response to my knock I said: "Sir, Colonel Donovan presents his compliments and begs to say that if General Crittenden will honour Company K by attending the dance in their quarters, the men will be very much gratified." I saw a look of surprised approval come into the eyes of the courtly Kentucky officer as he told me that Mrs. Crittenden and himself would at once come to the dance. This trivial incident is recorded merely because my diplomatic delivery of the above message led to my very nearly receiving my commission a few years afterwards; as will be related further on, a very slight grammatical error made by a department clerk in the wording of an order was the cause of my failing to don the shoulder straps.

Although malarial fever was not prevalent in Dakota it seemed that the climate developed the chills-and-fever in any new-comer who had the poison in his system. I had spent the previous summer in southern Michigan, and evidently the poisonous mosquito had

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inoculated me very freely, for in the spring, every forty-six hours, I became subject to violent attacks of chills; the periodicity was wonderfully regular, as within five minutes of the "zero hour," after I had given a preliminary yawn, my teeth would chatter and my whole body would be convulsed with shakes that could only be equalled by a modern girl dancing the shimmy. The post surgeon prescribed the approved remedy, viz. a small drink of choloroform followed, every three hours, by a spoonful of a mixture of quinine, cherry-bark, and whisky. One afternoon, after the hospital steward had supplied me with a ten-day supply of this medicine, I was stretched on my bunk shivering like a wet dog when the sentry on the block-house discharged his rifle, the *Long Roll* (alarm) was beaten, and within twenty seconds every man had fallen-in on the company parade outside the barrack door. A body of mounted hostiles were stampeding the garrison herd which was grazing outside the stockade. Company D and Company K (to which I belonged) were ordered to attack them, so off we went at the double through the stockade gate and then extended in skirmishing order. The ground sloped gently upward for about half a mile and then dipped sharply into a *coulée*. By the time we opened fire the Indians had driven the cattle nearly to the top of the rise and the herd was soon out of sight, but the main body of Sioux dismounted and lined the crest of the hill, from which they opened up at us with their Winchesters; however, as we approached them at the double they remounted and joined the others who were driving off the cattle. When we arrived at the crest of the hill nothing was to be seen but a rapidly moving cloud of dust far down the *coulée;* pursuit was hopeless.

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Being weak from fever, the exertion had been too much for me; I was all in, so the lieutenant who was in command of the company detailed two men to assist me back to barracks where I staggered into my bunk. Exhausted and feeble, I felt that I would give anything for a stimulant, but as we were in Indian territory it was difficult to obtain any spirits; one had to apply for a special permit to buy, which was not operative till the day after that on which the application had been made. I suddenly remembered my ten-days' supply of whisky-medicine, so seizing the bottle I drained it to the last drop. I awoke about noon on the following day with a splitting headache, but that was the last of my attacks of chills-and-fever; presumably the overdose of quinine had broken up the ailment.

At that time the engineers of the North Pacific Railroad had just completed the survey of the line through Minnesota and were preparing to continue their work through Dakota. They desired, in the first place, to locate the most favourable site for a bridge to cross the Missouri River, so it was decided to send a party of surveyors to the mouth of Apple Creek, and application for military protection was made to the authorities. A half-company of our regiment was to be assigned to this duty, so an order was promulgated that our 2nd lieutenant with thirty men of K Company were to proceed to Apple Creek and encamp at the place that had been selected by the railroad people; it was twenty-two miles to the north of Fort Rice and the site of what is now the city of Bismarck. Now, the lieutenant had been appointed to the regular army in recognition of the conspicuous bravery he had exhibited in the civil

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war, and not as a specialist in the higher mathematics, orthography, or caligraphy; our Kentucky general was aware of this and suggested to our company commander that he should detail me as the non-commissioned officer in charge. This arrangement was quite satisfactory to the lieutenant who, on my reporting to him in the afternoon, smiled blandly and directed me to "Go to it," as we should march at dawn the following day. "Go to it" meant filling in a pile of requisition forms for tents, two mule-wagons, rations, ammunition, medical supplies, six troop-horses, saddlery, oats, Spencer carbines and Remington revolvers for mounted duty, spare shoes for horse, mule, and man, axes, shovels, camp-kettles, and office stationery. After the lieutenant had done his share of the work by scrawling on the dotted line, all these supplies had to be drawn from the quartermaster's stores and loaded on the wagons.

When *réveillé* sounded we were on the march, and at noon we pitched our ten A-tents and the officer's wall tent on a bench overlooking the cottonwood-covered bottom lands through which the Missouri flowed. The survey party had not arrived.

We had been in camp only a few days when we experienced the worst blizzard that I have ever seen. It began with a heavy fall of snow which covered the ground to a depth of six inches, then there set in a cyclonic hurricane which threw the snow in every direction. I left my tent intending to give some instructions to the teamsters whose tent was about thirty yards from my own, but before I had gone half the distance the blinding, whirling snow dazed me, and losing all sense of direction I became completely lost. Dropping on my hands and knees I

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managed to find my own footprints which, though they were rapidly becoming obliterated, sufficed to guide me back to my tent. The temperature dropped to about zero and a cutting, cold wind penetrated the tent which three men shared with me, so we dug down to a depth of three feet into the sandy soil, making a rectangular excavation 8 ft. × 6 ft., this being the floor space of the A-tent. Altogether we had eight blankets, so when all four of us bedded down spoon fashion we found it warm and comfortable enough, although whenever one man turned over during the night, we all had to turn over. The storm continued throughout the following day, but one of the men ingeniously dug out a fireplace and a diminutive chimney passing under the back wall of the tent and thence upward to the surface of the ground; a hard-tack box provided fuel, so we had a glorious meal of fried bacon, hot coffee, and hard bread. For two days and nights we could not leave the tent, but when at last the storm ceased and the sun burst out we ran down to the corral which had been made for the animals at the foot of the bench and on the edge of the cottonwood thicket of the bottom lands. We found that fortunately every horse and mule had broken either its headstall or its halter-rope and taken shelter in the jungle or cottonwood, reeds, and bushes. We rounded them up without difficulty and double rations of oats for a couple of days brought them up to their normal condition.

About two days after this we had another slight snow-storm which, however, did not inconvenience us to any extent, but after we had turned-in for the night we suddenly heard a thundering of hoofs approaching the camp; the sentry fired his rifle and

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the remainder of the guard immediately afterwards sent volley after volley in the direction of the clamour; it was a pitch-dark night so nothing could be seen, but the men were ordered to lie down in line and commence firing; they continued firing so rapidly that I feared they would run out of cartridges, so I ran to the store tent and with the blade of an axe cut open two ammunition boxes, the lids of which had remained securely screwed down by the lieutenant's orders. It was too dark to see anything, but I could feel that the paper packets of cartridges were scattered over the floor, so I gathered as many as I could carry in my blouse and distributed them among the men. I could then hear the charging body making a wide detour round our left flank and rushing up the valley of Apple Creek. The bugler was ordered to sound the *cease fire*, lanterns were lighted, and everybody asked conundrums, but nobody could guess an answer. When day broke it was discovered that falling snow had obliterated all tracks. To this day, nobody knows what it was that gave us all such a fright. (Yes, that's the correct word to use, all right; this is a record of facts, not a report made to Parliament by a Secretary of State.)

Shortly after this the survey party arrived and made camp close to ours, so that one sentry was sufficient to guard both establishments. Every day four mounted men were detailed to accompany the engineers when they were engaged in running the survey lines, but we all had plenty of spare time which was spent in fishing, hunting, and reading.

One evening a despatch from head-quarters arrived, and the lieutenant gave me orders that the following morning all camp equipage, rations, etc., were to be

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packed up and left in charge of the survey party as we were to return to Fort Rice as speedily as possible; the men could ride in the wagons while the troop horses would supply mounts for himself and the non-commissioned officers.

In the morning we hustled, and arrived at head-quarters just as the guard was mounting at ten o'clock. The lieutenant marched up and reported his arrival to the general who was standing in front of his quarters. "But why are you here?" asked the commanding officer. "In conformity with the order you sent me yesterday, sir," replied the lieutenant, colouring up. They proceeded to the adjutant's office where it was explained that the wagons and horses were required at head-quarters, and not the lieutenant and his men. A redundant comma in the written order had caused an ambiguity which had led the lieutenant to understand that the "Wagons and his command," instead of the "Wagons with his command," were needed in such a hurry at Fort Rice. The general ordered him immediately to march his men (foot-back this time) back to Apple Creek camp, while I was to remain behind to fix up the invoices and receipts for the wagons, etc., transferred to the regimental quartermaster. The lieutenant scribbled a few words on a scrap of paper which he handed to me whispering, "Do that for me," and taking his place in the half-company, began his twenty-two mile hike.

It was late in the afternoon before my work with the quartermaster was finished, so, as all hope of overtaking the detachment was gone, I asked to be allowed to take the horse that I had always ridden. This was refused as all the horses and wagons were being

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mobilized in preparation for an expedition to the Yellowstone. I pointed out that for a man to go by himself on foot through twenty miles of hostile country was very hazardous. The Q.M. admitted this and gave me an order on the sergeant in charge of the garrison slaughter-cattle to supply me with one of the herd-horses. The sergeant was not very well pleased at this and gave me about the poorest horse in the bunch; it was a wretched old plug which could only with difficulty be urged to go faster than a walk, and after an hour's travel it went dead lame. I then realized my danger, for though a man well armed and mounted did not, provided he kept on the alert, run any great risk of being jumped by hostiles, yet the position of a man on foot leading a lame horse was quite different. Abandoning the wagon trail on the open prairie I descended into the bottom lands bordering the river which afforded good cover, and proceeded in a direction parallel to the prairie trail. This was bad judgment, I ought to have remained *perdu* till darkness set in and then returned to the trail. I kept a sharp look-out for Indian signs, noticing with satisfaction that the antelope which came within sight grazed peacefully and moved at a slow walk, whereas they would have been off at a run if Indians had been in their vicinity. Once, at a distance, I saw three Sioux standing on the river-bank flashing heliographic signals by means of their pocket mirrors to their friends on the opposite side of the Missouri; a canoe was sent across to them and the three Indians embarked in it. Altogether I felt satisfied that I was not being stalked, so trudged on towards camp; it was slow work forcing a way through the reeds and brush, so I did not arrive at the south bank of Apple

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Creek until about nine o'clock, when it was so dark that I couldn't find the bridge which led to our camp on the north side of the stream. The creek was covered with a coating of ice too thin to bear a man, so wading or swimming was out of the question. I spent a miserable night lying on the frozen ground and at dawn, discovering the bridge below a bend of the creek, I made my way to the camp where to my surprise I found the lieutenant pacing, impatiently, in front of his tent. When I explained to him why I had been delayed he expressed his indignation at the way I had so unnecessarily been exposed to danger, and added in a desponding tone that, of course, I had been unable to execute that little commission which he had surreptitiously asked me to carry out for him as he marched away from head-quarters under the general's eye. He was in the shivering, jerky condition often experienced in "The morning after the night before" (though for him there had been no "Night before"), so when I produced from my haversack the *wee drappie* from the post trader's store that the scrap of paper with which he had entrusted me called for, he registered the expression of joy that one sees in a close-up in the last reel of a movie where lips are meeting lips. He was genial enough to let down the bars of discipline to the extent of inviting me to join him; this I declined, but said that with his permission I would ask his dog-robber to fix me up a *prairie oyster* —for some unknown reason all officers' servants were called "dog-robbers," and the recipe for a *prairie oyster* is as follows: Of condensed milk, Worcestershire sauce, powdered sugar, vinegar, and boiling water take one tea-spoon each; add a dash of Jamaica ginger and stir thoroughly; slide into the mixture

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two raw eggs, care being taken not to break the yolks. "Here's How!"

Early one morning, a man of the detachment crawled into camp and we discovered that he had been shot through the body, a small bullet having entered his back near the spine and lodged just below the skin in the region of the solar plexus. There was no surgeon in camp, but it was an easy matter to hold the bullet between finger and thumb and cross-cut the distended skin with a razor; as the ball popped out on to the blanket on which we had laid him, I held it up so that he could see it; he was amazed and said: "Is that all? It felt as big as a cannon ball." He refused to say where he had been or how he had become wounded, so the lieutenant directed me to ride over to the recently established camp of a railroad contractor and make enquiries. The lieutenant handed me a civilian pilot coat of his own, telling me to wear it in place of my uniform blouse, and to go without arms.

When I arrived at the contractor's camp I found all the wagons laagered and the mules tied up at their feed boxes. I dismounted and approaching the boss of the camp asked him if any shooting had taken place round there the previous night. He replied that there might have been a little, so I explained that as one of our men had been shot, my officer had sent me to obtain information on the subject and I should be glad if the man who did the shooting would tell me about it. The teamster who had been on guard during the night said that he saw a man trying to steal one of the mules which was fastened to the tongue of a wagon, so he drew a bead on him and let him have it; the man fell and cried out that he was shot, so the

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teamster told him that he had better crawl away or he would be shot again.

It must be understood that in those days an army officer holding a U.S. commission possessed almost autocratic power in the vicinity of a military post, so I suggested that the teamster should return with me to our camp where he could see the lieutenant and sign a statement of what had occurred. Seeing that he hesitated to do this, I added that if any other of the boys could give any information it would be well for them also to come. This was considered satisfactory and nearly every man in the camp (nineteen of them as I subsequently counted) proposed to join the party. As none of them were mounted I led my horse by the bridle slipped over my arm, and walked by the side of the contractor, the remainder of the men following us in a bunch. We were about half-way to our camp when, by force of habit, I put my hands into the front pockets of the pilot coat when instantaneously the clicking sound of revolvers being cocked warned me that it would be prudent not to withdraw my hands. It seemed to me an age before the clicking ceased. I have a vivid recollection of the rapidly changing emotions which I experienced; they were in the following order: surprise, fear, anger, indignation, amusement, and finally contempt. It was only a few seconds before the last stage of my mental excitement arrived; I turned to the contractor, with whom I had been chatting amicably, and said: "I want to halt for a minute," and then facing about I looked at the crowd. Without any intention of being theatrical I withdrew one hand from my pocket, and slowly and systematically counted the number of men; there were exactly eighteen of them, every one with a

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cocked Colt in his grasp—the contractor had not drawn his gun. Eighteen six-shooters drawn on one unarmed man!

It would be an interesting problem in the psychology of crowds to discover whey these men concluded that a stranger who had no personal grievance against any of them should be fool enough to draw a pocket pistol to use against a member of their party while the other eighteen were within arm's-reach of his back. Was I (and am I) justified in feeling supreme contempt for such a flock of "sure-thing" poltroons?

When we arrived within sight of the camp the lieutenant came out to meet us and was given an account of the shooting, which he decided was justified. The wounded man had tried to steal the mule so that he could ride to the Minnesota border and desert. He soon recovered from his wound and received only a slight punishment as, in the American service, desertion was not regarded as such a heinous offence as it was in the British Army in pre-war days.

One fine spring morning when the surveyors went to work they found that during the night about four miles of their grade-stakes had been dragged up and placed in piles, each of which was surmounted by an eagle's feather. This manifestation of Indian displeasure led to our receiving an order to strike camp and proceed to Fort Rice where the regiment was preparing to take part in an expedition to the Yellowstone River where the railroad engineers wished to make a reconnaissance.

The expedition was commanded by General Stanley and comprised some troops of the 7th Cavalry, the 22nd Infantry, the 17th Infantry, some Field Artillery, and a gatling gun detachment together with a large

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wagon train. The Sioux did not attempt to attack such a large force, though they were always to be seen hovering at a safe distance on the flanks of the column. Only once did they get the chance to do any serious mischief; Lieutenant Crosby of the 22nd Infantry was riding a pony and shooting partridges about four hundred yards from the right flank of his company when three Sioux who were lying hidden in a near-by watercourse killed him with a shot through his left temple. Running up to the body they took the scalp-lock and two side-locks, and then raced back to their horses. On hearing the shots fired, all the men of Crosby's company ran to assist their officer, and some of them sprinted so well that they were able to shoot all three of the Indians before they could remount their horses. The men carried sheath knives, so each secured a gruesome trophy.

There seems to be considerable misapprehension as to what the process of scalping really is; many people imagine that all the skin of the hair-covered part of the head is cut away; there is in existence an oil painting entitled, "Custer's last stand," in which the heads of all the dead soldiers are depicted as having been completely flayed and resembling the coloured anatomical plates of a medical work. The Sioux custom was this: the Indian who actually killed or captured an enemy was entitled to the scalp-lock, which consisted of hair and a piece of skin about the size of a silver dollar, taken from the crown of the head. The other Indians who had assisted in the fight were each allowed to take one side-lock from that part of the head midway between the crown and the ear; these were somewhat smaller than the scalp-lock; these three locks were the only ones taken.

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The injury inflicted by the actual scalping was not very serious, but, of course, a man never submitted to the operation while he had sufficient life to resist. I was acquainted with a lady residing in Yankton who, in her youth, had been scalped by Indians who jumped the wagon train in which her parents were crossing the plains. They took her scalp-lock only, and she assured me that at the time of the scalping she felt but little pain; when she grew up there was no visible disfigurement, but when she altered the arrangement of her hair for my examination I saw there was on the crown of the head a bald spot which could easily be covered with a silver half-dollar.

On the completion of the reconnaissance of the Yellowstone country the expedition returned to the Missouri, and the 17th Infantry again garrisoned Fort Rice, but my company was detailed to proceed to Big Cheyenne Agency and there build a two-company military post adjoining the Indian Agency. Company I from an up-river station was to join us. We marched overland to Standing Rock Agency and travelled thence by steamboat to our destination.

A great many of the Agency buildings were unoccupied, and several old warehouses, in which flour, etc., had been stored, were empty, so there was no difficulty in finding temporary barrack accommodation for our two companies. Unfortunately the whole place was infested by large colonies of rats with their accompanying fleas, which robbed us of all sleep for several nights till, at last, we were so worn out that not even the biting and jumping pests kept us awake. One of our sergeants, who was tall and immensely powerful, suffered so much from the loss of sleep that one morning he became dangerously demented

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and had, for safety, to be confined in the guard-house. In the afternoon he suddenly forced his way past the men in the guard-house and throwing the sentry down ran out of the stockade gate and made his way to a bench about a quarter of a mile from the Agency on which were encamped fully a thousand Sioux who were extremely hostile, although they were not actually on the war-path. Fortunately the Indians recognized that the man was insane, and some superstition concerning madmen prevented them from molesting him as he raged through the tepees, as we afterwards learned, kicking the squaws and doing all kinds of mischief. In about an hour we were amazed to see him returning quite unharmed to the guard-house.

When the next south-bound steamboat arrived he was sent in charge of Sergeant Rogers of our company to the Insane Asylum at Washington, and, of course, was discharged from the army. While Rogers was in Washington he exercised some little political pull that he possessed and as a favour was granted his discharge from the service.

Owing to these discharges I became senior duty sergeant of my company.

The work of building the new post immediately began. The captain, who was a lieutenant in Company I, was appointed post quartermaster; he was a most energetic officer and an efficient all-round man. Nearly all the men in the garrison were put on what was officially termed "extra duty," which meant that they were *exempted* from all military duty and employed as artisans, loggers, teamsters, etc. The skilled men received an extra thirty-five cents a day working pay, the others received twenty cents.

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The garrison consisted of approximately one hundred and thirty men of all ranks, and fully half this number were more or less skilled at some trade. We had carpenters, painters, farriers, joiners, sawyers, harness-makers, loggers, teamsters, and a man who could run a stationary steam-engine. An outstanding feature of the American Army was that every company, troop, and battery contained such numbers of men who were qualified to undertake every description of skilled labour.

The captain generally exhibited much shrewdness in assigning men to do the work for which they were best fitted, but he directed me to take charge of the crew of the garrison six-oared yawl. As I had my eye on another billet, I unblushingly lied like a cheap watch, saying that I didn't know the near-side from the off-side of a boat, and should probably strain it if I tried to steer it across the river. He said, "No, no, Sergeant, that won't do; I looked up your attestation papers in the office and found that you were born at sea." It was true that on enlistment, as a matter of form, I was asked where I was born, and to avoid the bother of having to swear allegiance to a new nationality I had answered "At sea," but it was not clear to me why the captain concluded that therefore I must be an expert navigator. As a matter of fact, an old man-o'-war's-man named Dows who kept boats for hire on Brighton beach had taught me as a boy a good deal about boat-sailing. I was entered on the quartermaster's extra-duty pay sheet as "Captain of the boat's crew," at thirty-five cents a day, so I really had no kick to register.

The work of building the new post progressed admirably; a party of loggers was sent to a large

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cottonwood bottom about four miles up-stream, logs were cut, hauled to the river-bank and built into a small raft which was pushed out into the stream which had about a five-knot current. My duty was to board the raft when it was half a mile above the Agency, make fast to it the end of a three-inch hawser which was coiled in the yawl and then, without paying-out any of the hawser, tow the raft as close to the Agency shore as circumstances permitted. When abreast of the Agency we would leave the raft and pull for the shore, paying-out the hawser judiciously; as the bow of the yawl touched the bank the shore-end of the hawser was thrown to a large party of men stationed to receive it; the raft would then be hauled to its landing-place and secured.

Mule teams dragged the logs to the decrepit steam sawmill which had been lent to the quartermaster by the Indian Agent and by which they were sawed into boards, studding, and scantling, with which the carpenters built the barracks. The buildings were lined with tar paper, and the roofing-boards were covered with the same material, on the top of which was placed earth to a depth of four inches. The glaziers, painters, and cabinet-makers put on the finishing touches, and before winter set in the work was finished: Seven four-room cottages for the officers, two large barrack-rooms (one for each company), a hospital, a bakehouse, a commissariat store, a twenty-stall stable, a quartermaster's store and office, a large forage store, an enclosing stockade with its two block-houses, a flagstaff, and a sun-dial—some post!

We were just comfortably settled for the winter when I was detailed as one of a party to be sent on an

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expedition to the Black Hills. The Black Hills country, comprising five thousand square miles, was the most cherished possession of the Indians; the U.S. Government then recognized it as a reservation belonging solely to the Red man, and discountenanced all invasion of it by the Whites, although a few trappers who were generally squaw-men took up, with the tacit permission of the Sioux, their abode there during the winter.

The Black Hills consisted of mountains of sedimentary rocks, gashed in all directions with cañons, gloomy gulches, and narrow ravines into which the sun never penetrated; the wider valleys were park-like and flanked with vertical cliffs, from the tops of some of which sprang peaks and pinnacles towering to more than five thousand feet above the level of the valleys. The whole region abounded with elk, buffalo, Rocky Mountain sheep, bear, deer, wolves, and beaver. The timber was magnificent; I have seen fir trees eighty feet clear of limb, and in the declivities, filled with tall spruce wood, grew the slender, tough, straight saplings which the Sioux used as tepee poles.

For a score of years it had been rumoured among the Whites that the Hills were fabulously rich in gold, and occasionally foolhardy prospectors would attempt to steal into the reservation; the duty of the military was to head them off.

In midwinter it was discovered that a party of prospectors with pack-horses had left Sioux City intending to enter the Black Hills, so telegraphic orders were sent to the general at Fort Sully to detail an officer and twenty mounted men to intercept the gold-seekers. A major with ten men of the 22nd Infantry arrived at our post, which was seven miles

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from Fort Sully, and we were required to supply the other ten mounted men. I was detailed as sergeant in charge. We loaded two six-mule wagons with ten days' rations and forage, and set out accompanied by the Indian Agent and half a dozen Sioux scouts who, by means of signs and "speaking sticks" which at intervals they planted on our trail, spread the news to the surrounding Indians that we were acting to protect their interests and therefore they were not to attack us.

All the time we were absent from the post the thermometer never rose above zero; we were making forced marches of about thirty miles a day, so not one of us found life "one grand sweet song." Over our cavalry greatcoats we wore watch-coats made from buffalo robes; we had caps, gloves, and overshoes of buffalo, and yet after being in the saddle half an hour we became so numb and stiff with cold that at frequent intervals we had to dismount and lead our horses till we had warmed up. Being so bundled up it was with difficulty, and without elegance, that we climbed back into our saddles. All water on the prairie was frozen solid down to the ground, so after pitching tents at night we were engaged for two or three hours in melting snow in camp-kettles to obtain enough water to supply our horses with their daily drink. After we had marched two days the Black Hills, at a distance of eighty miles, began rising on the western horizon; they first appeared as remarkable dark-blue mounds, the clear, dry atmosphere giving to far-off scenery the *blue distance* effect.

Passing through the *Mauvaises Terres* (a labyrinth of ravines and dry watercourses eroded out of white clay bluffs rising from rolling plains of sand and marl)

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we arrived at the end of a plateau overlooking the forks of the Big Cheyenne River where we were to camp for the night. There was no trail, and from the edge of the plateau down to the river the ground was so slippery and pitched at such a steep angle that it seemed impossible for the wagons to negotiate it. However, one of the teamsters, who was a Missourian —they are born mule-skinners—chained up all the wheels, unhitched the four lead and swing mules, climbed into the saddle of his near-wheeler, and said that if we would fasten two stout ropes to the rear of the wagon, and if every one of us (Agent, major, and all) would hang on till hell froze over, he would toboggan down—we landed like the wrecked airship R-38, but no one was hurt.

The following morning we were traversing a lovely grassy valley in the foot-hills between the forks of the river when our Sioux scouts were seen standing dismounted in a bunch ahead of us. With the major's permission I galloped up to them and they pointed to a camping place where the gold-seekers had evidently slept. I thrust my hand into the ashes of the camp fire and found them cold; the prospectors had got in ahead of us and we had cut their trail instead of intercepting them. We were in for a stern chase, so orders were given that henceforth half-rations only were to be issued, and we pushed on, passing three of the prospectors' camps each day, so they must have been making only about ten miles a day. All their camps were *cold* and when we had passed through the foot-hills and entered the Black Hills proper, it was found impossible for the wagons to proceed, so we left them in charge of the teamsters, and taking some oats in the nosebags and a few hardtack in our

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haversacks we continued the pursuit. At last we struck one of the prospectors' camps which was *warm*, so although it was after sunset the major determined to make a night march; it soon became dark, and as we entered a narrow cañon between vertical walls of rock it became impossible to see anything at all. The path was strewn with boulders, logs, slide-rock, and shattered branches of trees, so dropping the reins on my horse's neck I resigned myself to the inevitable. The dear old horse justified my confidence; he would slide, climb, take long appreciative sniffs into the dark, jump, and mark time, but never a miscue; when dawn broke it was found that all the men had been equally lucky, though the major, who scaled 230 lb. without saddle, said to me, "Sergeant, if we return by this route it will be in the daytime."

Four of our Sioux scouts who had been sent to glean news from the Indians who were wintering in the Hills, rejoined us, bringing the information that the gold-seekers, having passed right through the Black Hills, had emerged on the west side, and were making their way towards the Platte. Our chase being over, we returned as rapidly as possible to our wagons, and after a day's rest started on the return journey to the Missouri which was more than a hundred miles from us. Gruelling work, zero temperature, and short rations for ten days had reduced us to a gaunt, ravenous crowd. Early one morning I overtook the scouts who had just shot an antelope and were cutting it up; scabbarding my dignity as a white man, I asked them to give me a piece of the meat, and one of them handed me a thick slice weighing nearly two pounds; galloping back to the wagons I got a handful of salt and rubbed it into the meat; as I was too

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ravenous to waste time in cooking I devoured the meat raw. It was the finest meal I have ever eaten.

Few rations and but little forage remained, so with nearly empty wagons we made a quick return journey to Cheyenne Agency, where the commanding officer had just finished organizing a party to send to our aid, or to learn our fate, as we were ten days overdue.

A few weeks after this, the office of post quartermaster-sergeant became vacant and at the request of the captain, the post commander detailed me for the position. This pleased me very much as the work was varied and interesting; I had my own quarters and office, and the pick of the stable when I required a horse either for pleasure or when supervising outdoor work; another satisfactory feature was that the pay was over thirty dollars a month, and as the captain seemed to think I was capable of doing the work he was good enough to give me every support and authorized all orders that I gave to the extra-duty men employed in the department. He left all the paper-work in my hands and it was only at the end of each quarter that he would spend an hour in the office signing reports and accounts which generally began with the stereotyped heading, "I certify on honour that, etc." He preferred outdoor work, such as superintending the sawing of lumber at the sawmill, arranging for supplies of cord-wood, hay, and slaughter cattle, and seeing that the machinery of his department ran smoothly.

The quartermaster stores contained all the tools and appliances pertaining to the various trades which were represented in building the post, and also large stocks of clothing, blankets, harness, and saddlery, so I was fully employed in keeping track of all these things and

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in noting the quantities of paint, oils, nails, and other "Expendable" stores which were used. The experience I gained was useful, and as the work really interested me I passed a very happy twelve months.

There were two Indian chiefs named *White Bull* and the *Young Man afraid of his Horses*, who remained permanently at the Agency. They had always been favourably disposed towards the white man and often gave to the Agent important information about half-hostile Indians camped in the vicinity. Whenever they pleased they were permitted to come within the stockade without a "Speaking Paper" and were given liberal presents of coffee, sugar, and other luxuries. One morning I discovered three Sioux warriors hurrying just outside our stockade towards the river-bank where the garrison skiff happened to be tied up; they jumped into the boat and prepared to put off in it, so I ran up and crawled through a hole in the stockade which had just been broken down there by the river washing away a part of the bank supporting it. From the overlooking bank I ordered the Indians to get out of the boat and to clear off, but they ignored me, so I drew my revolver and covering the nearest Sioux repeated my order. They began to drag the buckskin covers off their Winchesters, so I prepared to jump for safety behind some of the stockade planks which would afford me good cover and enable me to shoot with advantage, but at that instant the *Young Man afraid of his Horses* appeared at my side. In his right hand he had an unstrung bow which he shook at the three Sioux, giving them the prettiest bawling-out that I have ever heard. Sullenly they replaced their rifles in their covers, slipped out of the boat and sneaked off

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into the reeds some distance up-stream. I expressed my gratitude by saying, "How, Koola! Washtay," and handing a half-pound plug of Virginia gold-leaf tobacco to the Young Man who was not afraid of three Sioux warriors however much his horses may have bluffed him.

The reader may have noticed that not much has been recorded about the captain of my company, but as the course of my career was abruptly changed through my relations with him it is necessary to describe some of the characteristics of this very gallant officer. In the civil war he had exhibited conspicuous bravery and was colonel of a Volunteer regiment in the Union forces. He had received many wounds, one in the leg which resulted in a slight though permanent limp, and another in the head, where the bullet had entered his left eye, passed through the head, and emerged close to the back of his left ear; considering the large calibre rifle balls used in those days it is marvellous that he was not instantly killed. At the close of the war he was given a captain's commission in the 17th Infantry. In ordinary circumstances his mental powers appeared unimpaired, and it was only those who were brought in intimate contact with him that discovered that his brain was not quite normal. He had an obsession which took the form of an extraordinary antipathy to undersized men, while he delighted in the company of men who were above the average in height; he, himself, was six feet four inches, but I do not believe that this was the cause of his idiosyncrasy. As I happened to be more than a six-footer he was always very favourably disposed towards me and endeavoured to keep me doing duty with the company; this was very

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flattering, of course, but it was detrimental to my personal interests, as when I was on "extra duty" I drew more pay and had the advantage of coming under the notice of other companies and of other regiments. All assignments to extra duty were made by the officer commanding the garrison, and therefore the captain of a company could not prevent any of his men being temporarily removed from his control.

I had been performing the duties of post quartermaster-sergeant for a little over a year when the captain of my company delivered a *coup de main*—he appointed me his first sergeant. Now, the "Top Sergeant" being the captain's right-hand man he cannot be kept away from his company, so I reluctantly kissed good-bye to my extra pay and riding horse, and took up my new duties.

At most frontier posts fourteen feet of the company barrack-room are partitioned off to form the company office and store room, and it is here that the first sergeant has his quarters which he shares with the company clerk who is detailed to do the clerical work of the company. Retained copies of all documents issued by the company commander together with muster-rolls, clothing, and ration accounts, pay sheets, etc., are here kept on file, so when a new first sergeant is appointed he has no difficulty in ascertaining exactly how the affairs of the company stand. As the company clerk is required to perform no other duty than that of keeping the accounts and returns accurately and neatly, he has ample time to make the documents models of accuracy and caligraphy.

In the earlier part of this chapter reference is made to a former first sergeant who had been found guilty of making away with new uniforms belonging to the

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company, and that if it had not been for the bursting of some bottles of wine which led to an enquiry, his theft would probably have remained undiscovered. It was in looking over the men's clothing accounts for previous years that I was enlightened as to a piece of rascality about which I had often heard whispers though I never believed them. For example, take the case of a deserter: the man's clothing account showed that just before he left he drew from the company store a large quantity of uniform, boots, and underclothing; when he was reported as absent without leave the things which he left behind were taken into the office and a list made of them. This document would afford *evidence* that when he deserted he took with him nearly everything of value in his possession—rifle, haversack, ammunition, full-dress uniform with brass scales (epaulets), black felt hat looped up with a brass U.S. badge, cavalry great-coat, boots, reinforced trousers, etc. According to the documentary evidence he must have hit the trail looking like one of the Bersaglieri going to an afternoon parade at Rome.

Now, in the course of my duties I have had the unhappiness to intercept deserters trying to sneak away through the cottonwood bottoms of the Missouri, and found that all their earthly possessions consisted of old buckskin shirt and trousers, a pair of moccasins without socks, a buffalo cap, and a meagre supply of food wrapped up in a civilian shirt. When a deserter was captured it was a matter of indifference to him as to how much was shown on the debit side of his clothing account because all his pay and allowances would be forfeited by sentence of the court martial that would try him. During the month in which he

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deserted he might have drawn, say, a pair of socks and signed for them, but the red-lining of the clothing roll which would guard against other articles being surreptitiously charged against him, might be delayed till the account was balanced and closed at the end of the month.

I quite believe that at the present day such irregularities do not occur, as the graduates of the West Point Academy are highly trained soldiers, and scholars, and gentlemen who would not tolerate any laxity in the methods of military bookkeeping, but an intelligent examination of the accounts and returns filed at Washington fifty years ago will, in some cases, show that such things did happen.

About the time that I was appointed first sergeant all the officers of the garrison were good enough to sign a recommendation that I should be ordered to appear before a Board at Washington for examination as to my fitness for a commission in the U.S. Army. This was of course sent for approval and transmission to our colonel, General Crittenden, who was with regimental head-quarters at a post in Minnesota. Several months passed when, one day, an order arrived by mail from departmental head-quarters directing me at once to proceed to the head-quarters of the 17th Infantry and report to the commanding officer. The purport of the order was perfectly plain, but unfortunately it was dated from departmental head-quarters at St. Paul, Minnesota, and was worded somewhat as follows:

"First Sergeant Charles Thompson of Co. K, 17th Infantry, will immediately proceed hence to Fort —— and there report to the officer commanding his regiment."

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When my captain showed me the order I was naturally much elated, concluding that its promulgation was in some way connected with the promotion that I was eagerly anticipating, but to my intense disappointment the captain told me that he would not allow me to leave, as the order directed me to go from St. Paul to Fort ——, but did not authorize my leaving my present station—the word "hence" implied from St. Paul and not from Big Cheyenne Agency! Remonstrance was useless, as I at once perceived that the captain's mania for having tall men doing duty in his company was influencing him in his action in the matter; probably the thought that my interests were being sacrificed never entered his mind.

A friend of mine was holding a position at regimental head-quarters which gave him the opportunity of knowing all about regimental matters, so I wrote to him explaining the position of affairs and asking him to let me know why I had been ordered to report to General Crittenden. As the mails had to be carried by despatch riders down to Sioux City and then forwarded by rail to Minnesota, it took some time before I received an answer to my letter, but at last I heard from my friend who told me that the position of regimental sergeant-major had become vacant and that the general had intended to promote me to the vacancy, thereby improving my chances with the Board of Examination at Washington when I should be called before it. However, the vacancy could not be kept open, and since my captain's action had caused so much delay the order for me to join regimental head-quarters had been cancelled. My friend added that I had his permission to show his letter to my captain if I desired to do so; I availed myself of this

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permission, but the captain made no remark about the letter, and though I closely observed his face I could detect no expression either of sympathy or regret.

I was in an extremely bitter mood; for eight of the best years of my life I had worked industriously to fit myself for a successful military career; I had cheerfully endured hardships incidental to the life of a soldier in the ranks, and had willingly foregone the legitimate pleasures attending Youth in civil life, and just as my ambitious hopes seemed within my grasp I had met with this piece of hard luck. The period for which I had enlisted was nearly finished and I realized that if I re-engaged it would have to be in the company in which I was then serving, otherwise I should have again to begin at the bottom of the ladder, as the appointment to non-commissioned rank was not a regimental but a company proceeding. To continue serving under my captain in view of his unhappy mental condition would be madness; I should never be able to tell from day to day what might happen!

I determined to leave the service.

On the 26th September, 1875, my period of service expired, and I respectfully demanded my discharge. The captain was incredulous, astonished, and shocked; he offered, if I would re-engage, to give me six months' furlough on full pay, and to obtain from Washington permission for me "to proceed beyond the seas," which was the official way of saying I might visit Europe on furlough. While we were talking, a south-bound steamboat sounded its whistle indicating that it was about to put-in at the landing-place. I said: "Colonel, I am going by that boat; please

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give me my discharge papers." He went into the company office and writing "Very Excellent" in large letters on the tail of my parchment he handed it to me.

It was a few years after that that the military authorities at Washington became aware of the seriousness of the injuries that this gallant gentleman had received in the service of his country, and he was retired from the service on full pension.

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Chapter IV

CAPE COLONY—THE FRONTIER ARMED MOUNTED POLICE —GREAT BUSHMANLAND—KAFFRARIA

Anyone who sought a modified *dolce far niente* towards the end of the nineteenth century could hardly have done better than visit Cape Colony where the mixed influence of Dutchman, Protestant Frenchman, German, Briton, Kafir, Zulu, Hottentot, and Bosjesman (Bushman) had produced conditions unparalleled by any other country. Railways were in their infancy, newspapers were published twice, or, at most, three times a week; mails were in some districts carried in carts drawn by six oxen, while on more important routes a Cape cart drawn by six horses was used. The means of travel consisted of riding horses, a Cape cart and pair of horses, or an immense wagon drawn by sixteen oxen; the last-named was by far the most comfortable conveyance, but as twenty-two miles in twenty-four hours was the average rate of its progress the traveller who was pressed for time would either bump the pig-skin or use a cart and pair. It is admitted that telegraph wires connected the towns and the larger villages, but telegrams to smaller settlements would, in the final stage of their journey, often be conveyed with the mails in the ox-carts used in mountainous districts such as the Knysna and Lydenburg.

Living in these circumstances who could hustle?

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The "Sweet doing nothing" soon became second nature.

Wool, hides, ostrich feathers, and diamonds were the exports from the country, and though the fertile belt surrounding Cape Town produced delicious fruit, fair wine, poor brandy, and a little wheat, nearly all these supplies were consumed in the Colony itself. The Colony was not suitable for European labourers nor even for artisans except perhaps stonemasons, farriers, and Cornish miners to work in the Namaqualand copper mines; the manual work of the country was done by the natives who lived more cheaply than the white man who, moreover, could not labour alongside of them on equal terms. The colour-line was rigidly observed, and the white emigrant at once learned that he had to abide by the customs of the country, otherwise he would be shunned like a leper.

However, any energetic young man of ordinary education, especially if he possessed two or three hundred pounds' capital, could find congenial work and make a very comfortable living. If he had an eye for horseflesh he might be successful as a dealer; transport riding, i.e. freighting, was an easy and pleasant occupation; clerical work in merchants' offices was not difficult to obtain; then there were junior positions in the Civil Service—"The home for the destitute" as the jokesmiths termed it—which might be considered. In short, the young fellow who was sober and honest was far from being a drug in the market in Cape Colony.

At the beginning of the year 1876 I had settled down in civil life at Grahamstown, known to rival towns as "The City of the Saints." The town had a

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white population of about six thousand, almost exclusively British, and was charmingly situated in a shallow valley nestling in a plateau having an altitude of seventeen hundred feet above the sea which was about forty miles distant. The plateau was bounded on the north by the Zuurberg range of mountains through which there was only one pass available for wheeled traffic: this was Howison's Poort, having its entrance a short distance from the town. Most of the roads from the interior converged to enter this pass, so nearly all the wool and hides from up-country passed through the town on wagons each carrying upwards of 8000 lb. and drawn by sixteen or eighteen oxen.

Grahamstown was about fifty years old and very pleased with itself; there was some justification for this attitude as it had a delightful climate, excellent water supply, and many handsome public buildings comprising a cathedral, the Albany Hall, and a fine town clock-tower. There were many schools, a good museum, a reading room, and a public library containing "Seven thousand volumes!" In the early days when the Kafirs occupied the surrounding country a strong garrison of British troops was stationed here, the Infantry in the large barracks known as *Fort England*, while the original Cape Mounted Rifles (an Imperial composite regiment consisting of Hottentots and of British soldiers who were generally serving their second term of enlistment) had their quarters in the *Cape Corps Barracks* on the opposite side of the town. In the course of time the Kafirs had been driven eastward nearer the Kei River, which was the boundary of the Colony, and the troops were removed from Grahamstown

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to King Williamstown, some fifty miles to the north-east.

The people of Grahamstown led placid and happy lives; the standard amusement was the picnic where kiss-in-the-ring and gathering wild flowers passed the happy hours away; then there were riding parties, for every one in South Africa owned a horse, the animals being inexpensive and largely grass-fed; choir practices were popular, notwithstanding the apparent scarcity of hymn books which necessitated the singers going fifty-fifty in their use. Occasionally the Dean would arrange a pink tea (it wasn't called "pink" then, but no matter) to raise money for some worthy object. Some of the more reckless and pleasure-loving of the community might attend an evening concert given by the band of the newly raised Volunteer Rifle Corps to defray the expenses incurred in obtaining instruments, but this entertainment was rather frowned upon by the better set of townspeople as the attendance often entailed infraction of the unwritten but rigid law that every one should retire to rest at 9 p.m.

My own favourite dissipation was spending the evening in the public library which the librarian and myself invariably had all to ourselves. As far as I can recollect, in six months only one visitor entered the room and destroyed the holy calm. Each night at nine o'clock the library closed, and as I wended my way back to my room I would seldom meet anyone in the tree-lined streets, while all the residences would be closed and in darkness. One evening, being caught in a sharp shower of rain, I sought shelter under one of the shade-trees between the footpath and the road, and just opposite the door of a private house. The

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owner must have seen me from the window of his upstairs bedroom, for in a few minutes he and his wife appeared at the front door demanding to know why I was loitering in the street "at that time of night," and ordering me to move on. Now, as it was only about a quarter past nine and I was standing on the Queen's highway without obstructing any traffic, I gave him a short lecture on the rights of the citizen, and admonished him to retire to his sty and avoid falling over his feed-trough in the dark.

The merchants of the town would arrive at their offices about nine o'clock in the morning and work till noon, when they would go home to dinner. At about 4 p.m. they would again be visible at their offices and at 6 p.m. many of them would be seen strolling up to the post office to mail their letters. That closed the day's work; something attempted, something done, had earned a night's repose.

I had spent twelve months in civil life, was not overworked, and having made many pleasant friends and acquaintances took my share of the amusements and social amenities afforded by colonial life, but I did not feel contented. I missed the *camaraderie* of the soldier's life which for eight years I had enjoyed, and my thoughts were constantly reverting to the songs, yarns, and confidences one heard round the camp fire of a bivouac; to the innumerable little acts of kindness invariably extended by comrade to comrade, the loan of a burnisher, the sharing of a pint of ale with one who was "under stoppages"; to the telepathic talks which took place between man and troop-horse when the latter was revelling in the delights of *stables*. The absence of personal freedom and the restraints of discipline were not forgotten,

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but they kicked the beam when thrown into the balance against the pleasant memories of army life.

Othello said a mouthful when he raved the lament:

> Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
> That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,
> Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
> The royal banner and all quality,
> Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
> And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
> The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
> Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

As time went on the recurring waves of nostalgia (for *barracks* had become with me almost synonymous with *home*) increased in force, and were wrecking the prospects of my ever becoming a typical ornament of the "City of the Saints." One afternoon I was walking on the veldt a mile or two out of town when I suddenly came across a man dressed in an excessively neat black uniform and with a snow-white puggaree wrapped round his shallow shako; his whole turn-out was that of an ideal light-horseman. He had just finished drinking some coffee which he had cooked on a cow-dung fire, and held in his hand a chunk of Boer-meal bread. His horse trotted up to him and after rubbing its head over the man's breast, wrapped a long tongue round the bread held out to it and nodded continuously till it had eaten it. The man put a little sugar into the palm of his hand and after the horse had licked it up he mounted and trotted away.

I had not spoken to the horseman, but what I had seen induced in me a regular tidal-wave of nostalgia; I hurried into town and told my boss that I should be leaving him at the end of the week as I proposed joining

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the standing defence force of the Colony, the Frontier Armed Mounted Police, which had its headquarters at King Williamstown.

The following Sunday I booked a seat in the post cart which would leave for King Williamstown very early on Monday morning, and took a room at the hotel where the post cart always called to make up its passengers. There were two other guests, Barry Sullivan, a tragedian of some eminence who was a great favourite with the Australian public, and his advance agent. I passed a most interesting evening listening to their experiences since they had landed at Cape Town to try how a theatrical tour through the country would pan out. Sullivan was giving a single-handed show, representing in costume characters such as Hamlet, Manfred, Shylock, and other fellows who could talk lengthily at an audience. Cape Town itself possessed the only theatre in South Africa, so Sullivan literally "Barn-stormed" his way across the colony, giving performances in storekeepers' warehouses, wool-washery sheds, and farmers' barns. Grahamstown, of course, afforded better accommodation, and on Saturday night he had opened up at the Albany Hall, but unfortunately among his stage properties he carried a dozen tin reflecting shades, each containing a candle to light up the stage, when there happened to be one. In the afternoon some one had seen these placed ready for the evening performance and a rumour of "Footlights!" spread through the town; this was going *rather too far* for Grahamstown. No money was returned, as none had been taken, and Sullivan and his agent spent the evening at the hotel billiard table.

By the way, every hotel in South Africa had its billiard table just as naturally as a circle had its

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centre; every colonist could, and did, mishandle a cue.

Barry Sullivan's theatrical speculation was financially disastrous, as travelling in the country was extremely expensive for anyone who did not possess his own horses and rig. The average fare by post cart was 1s. 3d. a mile, the hire of a cart and pair ran from £3 to £3 10s. a day, and though one could travel cheaply enough by ox-wagon it went so slowly that it could be used only when time was no object.

Bright and early on Monday morning the post cart drew up at the hotel and I climbed on to the top of the mail sacks with which it was filled. The driver was a "Cape Boy," a name given in the Western Province to half-breeds descended from native women formerly imported from St. Helena, and Cape Hottentots. They were not model citizens, but they were unrivalled as drivers of horse and mule teams. As soon as I had settled into the safest available place on the sacks the Cape boy cracked his whip and the six horses sprang against their breast-straps (horse-collars were never used) rearing, passaging, and kicking; the high-wheeled cart swayed and plunged forward, jumped down into a broad shallow gutter crossing the road and bounced out again. In a minute or two the driver applied the foot-brake and with marvellous dexterity manipulated his handful of reins so as to steady the team; he seized a battered old army bugle and sounded some loud but inharmonious notes, giving warning to the world that as he, by law, had the right of way, the drivers of other vehicles must clear out of the road; they promptly did so: ox-teams and wagons were drawn aside in line with the shade-trees, light rigs and horsemen drew away

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from the middle of the road, and we dashed through a cloud of thick dust at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

Every six or eight miles a fresh team of horses was furnished, so we made good time and finished our journey of fifty miles early in the afternoon.

The name King Williamstown seldom appeared except on the envelope of an official letter; the town was always, very sensibly, called simply "King"; it was situated about forty miles west of the Kei River, which formed the eastern boundary of the Colony. Many farmers in the district were Germans who having served in the German Legion during the Crimean war were rewarded with grants of land in this part of the country; on account of their military training they added greatly to the security of the frontier settlements which were surrounded by a large Kafir population. In the town, a British infantry regiment and some artillery were stationed in barracks, and the head-quarter troop of the Frontier Armed Mounted Police occupied quarters specially built for its accommodation. There were two comfortable hotels which were much frequented in the evenings by the town residents who came to play billiards and pool, and exchange gossip. The social atmosphere was very different from that of the "City of the Saints."

The Frontier Armed Mounted Police was a force raised by the Government of Cape Colony for the protection of the Eastern Province. It had been organized by Sir Walter Currie and proved so efficient that it was gradually enlarged till in 1876 it consisted of upwards of a thousand mounted men under the command of Commandant Bowker. It was recruited

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principally, though not universally, in England, and great care was taken that applicants for admission to its ranks should be of irreproachable character and possessed of an education superior to that generally met with in enlisted men of armies raised under the voluntary system. The pay of the men was five shillings and sixpence a day, out of which they had to supply themselves with horse, saddlery, uniform, rations, forage, etc., in fact, with everything except arms and ammunition, which were furnished by the Government. The force consisted of nine troops, but in ordinary times the men would operate in small detachments scattered about the frontier and the Kafir country. Extreme mobility was the great aim of the authorities and in accordance with this policy there was practically no quartermaster's department; there was no camp equipage, no transport wagons, and no commissariat. The men were expected to shelter and feed themselves and their horses as best they could; fortunately the climate was favourable; small isolated traders' stores were numerous, and throughout the country there were many abandoned military forts and huts which had been built by the old Cape Corps while engaged in the five Kafir wars that had been waged during the previous half-century.

The morning after my arrival at King I went to head-quarters and expressed to Commandant Bowker my wish to join his corps; he examined my army papers and certificates, stated the terms of enlistment, and explained that as the efficiency of the force was to a great extent due to its mobility the men were subject to severe discomforts and were expected to be resourceful—"kickers" and sea-lawyers were not desired. On reiterating my desire to enlist I was taken

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in hand by Sergeant Theodore Manning, the staff clerk, who made out the necessary attestation papers and swore me in.

Thus for the third time in my life I began at the bottom of the military ladder.

Sergeant Manning, who was the nephew of Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, told me that a number of recruits had just been assigned to No. 7 Troop and were under orders to proceed at 8 a.m. the following morning to Fort Peddie and that I was to join the squad. I applied for, and received, leave of absence till the time set for our departure from head-quarters, and went to one of the tailors in the town to be measured for my uniform which was to be sent after me to Fort Peddie. Late in the afternoon I strolled round to the barracks and found the men at evening stables; I saw a couple of wheelbarrows full of stable-refuse, but there were no shovels, stable-forks, nor utensils of any kind (their possession would have militated against F.A.M.P. mobility), so the men in cleaning-up were using old grain sacks, whisp-brooms cut from near-by bushes, and their bare hands. Approaching one of the stalls, I saw a man engaged in removing veldt-ticks from under his horse's tail, an operation which in South Africa must be assiduously performed by every one aspiring to be an efficient horse-master. He was dressed in a pair of old uniform breeches, a sleeveless under-vest, a forage cap, and a monocle attached to the thinnest of black silk cords; he had already cleaned up the stall and the state of his arms and bared breast proved it. Perceiving that he had become aware of my presence I said: "My name's Thompson, and I have just been assigned to No. 7"; he immediately shook my hand most heartily, and with

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that characteristic accent which was the vogue at the 'Varsities, Piccadilly, Old Bond Street, and at the railing of the *Ladies' Mile* in Hyde Park, said: "How do you do, old fellow? I'm glad you've joined us. You'll find the shooting round Peddie not half bad." He had resigned a billet in the London and Westminster Bank in London to become an F.A.M.P.; some years afterwards he was appointed Resident Commissioner of Basutoland and was knighted for his services.

The following morning at the appointed hour I joined the squad of about twenty recruits when they paraded to leave head-quarters for Fort Peddie, which was about thirty miles south-west from King and near the Keiskamma River. They were all in uniform but had not obtained their horses, so we took our places in two mule-wagons which had been hired for our conveyance, and began our trek.

To convey an idea of the personnel of the corps it may be well to record, as far as recollection serves, the names of most of my fellow-recruits on the journey; they, of course, were all of the rank of private; they were:

Bob Winslow, son of Dr. Forbes Winslow, the celebrated alienist.

Barker, brother of the inventor of the hydraulic railway brake.

Cook, son of the proprietor of Cook's circus.

Hannam, brother of a clergyman in South Kensington.

Garratt, an Oxford graduate and author of a small book of poems.

Scotty Smith, who afterwards became a notorious horse-thief and was eventually shot while following his profession.

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Charlie Drummond Hay, nephew of Sir John Drummond Hay, Consul-General at Tangier.

Tim Healy, a London actor.

Cole, son of Judge Cole of Cape Town.

Bob Soutar, stepson of Miss Nellie Farren (Mrs. Soutar), London's favourite burlesque actress in the 70's and 80's.

Rowe, who had been on the clerical staff of the General Post Office, London.

Chauncey, who was afterwards one of the leading members of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Bob Kennan, son of Major Kennan, Secretary of the Travellers' Club.

Mention may be made of other privates I remember meeting, though they did not belong to No. 7 Troop:

Underhill, an Oxford graduate.

Cavagnari, brother of Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Envoy to Afghanistan who, in 1879, was with his staff and escort massacred at Kabul.

H. A. Broome, son of the Rev. J. H. Broome, Vicar of Houghton.

—— (name forgotten) a young fellow who had recently received a commission in a Hussar regiment but had not joined it, a quarrel with his father over some small matter being the cause of his suddenly leaving for the Cape.

The corps contained a great many youngsters who had been "spun" in the examinations for army commissions and for the Civil Service; farm-pupils who had discovered early in their career that their parents had paid outrageous premiums for them to be put to work feeding swine, cleaning plough-horses, and receiving ample instruction in—*nothing;* sons of army officers on half-pay, and a sprinkling of youths

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who had found that "a seat in a merchant's office" gave them a pain. In the British Isles there is a stratum of the population where certain means of earning a living are absolutely *taboo;* one must not be a clerk in a store, a druggist's assistant, nor engaged in retail business of any kind; a scion of a family in this stratum cannot, without incurring social ostracism, play an instrument in a theatre orchestra, nor wear the King's uniform issued to an enlisted man; yet, strange to say, he may become a horse-policeman in a colony, a billiard-marker in Australia, or navigate a glass-bottomed boat on the coast of California to show the submerged coral formations to tourists at twenty-five cents a head and still his sisters, in conversing with their friends, will not hesitate to tell them of his experiences, often, too, with a poorly concealed touch of pride.

About four-fifths of the F.A.M.P. were men of the above stamp, the remaining fifth being colonial-born men most of whom were experienced frontiers-men, superb horse-masters, and bilinguous—English and the *taal*, i.e. vernacular Dutch to which has been added many Malay, French, Kafir, and Portuguese words.

At the time I joined, the non-commissioned ranks were to a great extent filled by the colonial men, but shortly afterwards the men who had greater educational attainments began to replace them.

So it came to pass that I, who had been pining for the congenial society of soldier-comrades, suddenly found myself on velvet.

The clothing, accoutrements, and horse-furniture were admirably adapted to the rough, roving life led by the members of the corps while performing the

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duties devolving on them in defending the frontier. The uniform consisted of a black corduroy patrol-jacket and reinforced cavalry overalls, a small shako shaped something like a French képi, round which was wound a white muslin puggaree with loose ends, affording protection against the sun to the wearer's neck and spine; lace-up leather leggings and ankle boots with a pair of light jack-spurs completed the outfit. A forage cap of " pill-box " pattern replaced the shako for fatigue duty, *stables*, etc. The chevrons of the non-commissioned officers were of silver lace. It was a very inexpensive uniform, but as the men were in the habit of frequently redyeing the jacket and overalls in a decoction of log-wood with a pinch of copperas, the uniform invariably appeared new, jet-black, and serviceable. An ankle-long, roomy, caped waterproof (?) overcoat was provided for use in rainy weather, as the regulation cavalry cloak was inordinately heavy, especially after exposure to rain for four or five hours.

The horse-furniture consisted of a hunting saddle and crupper, a saddlebag, a very small horseman's valise, headstall with *riempje* (head-rope), and knee-band, a nosebag and a light bit, generally of the Pelham pattern.

The accoutrements were: haversack, canteen, patrol-tin (mess-tin), with leather case, waistbelt with ammunition pockets all round it, carbine sling, and revolver holster with shoulder strap.

In addition to his troop horse all the above articles had to be purchased by the man himself, but he could draw from the head-quarter store everything that he required and the cost was stopped out of his pay. The only things that the Government supplied were

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arms and ammunition; for his use each man was served out with a Snider breech-loading carbine, and a small double-action Webley revolver; an unlimited supply of ammunition was issued, as the authorities encouraged the men to shoot all the game they required to replenish their stores of fresh meat. Probably it was this policy that appealed to many young men in England and added to the popularity of the service.

It was computed that in heavy marching order the horse carried a load of about 70 lb. in addition to the rider who would weigh, say, 150 lb. This total weight of 220 lb. was a very reasonable burden when compared with that carried by Imperial Hussar troop-horses which had to carry more than 300 lb.; even at the present time (1922) the Canadian cavalry horses are required to carry 250 lb.

But to return to our muttons, the boys in the mule-wagons. On arrival at Fort Peddie early in the afternoon we were looked over by the troop sergeant-major who told us we were at liberty to select any of the unoccupied barrack-rooms that pleased us. The station had been built in the early days to accommodate a troop of cavalry, probably of the Cape Corps; the whole of one side of the square parade ground was occupied by a row of numerous small rooms, each affording comfortable accommodation for about six men; on the opposite side of the square stood a long line of stables. Not more than half the rooms were occupied, so "Slab" Cook (scion of the celebrated circus of that ilk) and myself took up our quarters in one of the smaller barrack-rooms, which we had entirely to ourselves. Slab was a rather weedy youth —hence the pseudonym—a nineteen-year-old blond

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and one of the best; strange to say, beyond the horizon of the *Big-Top* he appeared to have seen no more of this world of ours than had a baby kitten with unopened eyes, but we soon discovered that he had a heart as big and warm as a stove.

The troop was commanded by Inspector Richard A. Nesbitt, "Dickie Nesbitt" as he was called by every one from the Zambesi to the Cape, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic; his subaltern was Sub-Inspector Wilde (Cocky Wilde), who belonged to one of the leading families of Cape Town. The Fates had been kind to No. 7 Troop.

The troop sergeant-major knew his duties from zero to infinity and seemed able, if necessary, to do his work efficiently upside-down, backwards way, or on the bias; under his tuition the recruits speedily learned the proper way of doing sentry-go and horse-guard (herding the horses on the veldt), how to clean their saddlery and use curry-comb and brush, to fasten their girths with a Mexican hitch, to dye their uniforms black, to recognize the age and points of a good horse, to clean the stables with their bare hands, and to regard *grousing* as a deadly sin.

A corporal with many years' service to his credit was struck off duty to drill the squad; his knowledge of the subject was, "Not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door," but it served. Now, it seemed to me that it was similar to painting the lily when for two hours a day he admonished me (with the others) to "turn my feet out at an angle of sixty degrees," so I made a little plan. Just at that period a Kafir war seemed impending and companies of Volunteers were being organized in the various districts, so the Government directed the F.A.M.P. to supply quali-

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fied drill instructors to those Volunteer corps that needed them. Our head-quarters promulgated an order that any man who wished an assignment as drill instructor to the Volunteers could submit to the commandant his military certificates, and his application would be considered. I promptly took my sheaf of parchments which I had collected in eight years to Inspector Nesbitt and asked him to forward my application for an appointment as instructor—and I was a recruit, too! Oh! I was sly; for choice, I wouldn't have been found dead in a Volunteer Rifle Corps, but I wished to put Dickie wise to the fact that, though one of his recruits, I, like the Pharisee, was not as other men were. The scheme worked; Dickie looked through all the papers and his eyes twinkled as he said that he was afraid that all the vacancies would be filled before my certificates could reach head-quarters. I instantly withdrew the application and received back my parchments. That afternoon our drill corporal received a hint to report that he believed me sufficiently proficient to be dismissed from recruit's drill; that saved his face and relieved me from having to turn my feet out at an angle of sixty degrees.

In a short time all the recruits, aided by the advice of the Inspector and troop sergeant-major, had purchased their horses from the farmers who brought them in to the fort for sale. It did not take them long to learn all about stable duty; as long as the horses were properly fed, well groomed, and the stalls cleaned up, the officers were satisfied, and permitted the men to doll-up in any old stable dress that suited them; most of the men adopted (very nearly) the costume in which Eve went apple picking, and when

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the dismiss from stables sounded both morning and evening they would run down to the large *vlei*, or pond, which was just outside the fort, and have a swim. What breakfasts we did eat!

The butcher-baker-grocery storekeeper in the village would call every morning at the barracks to take our individual orders and would deliver the supplies about noon. One day I received orders to carry a despatch to a mail station fifteen miles distant, and was saddling up when the delivery man brought my modest ration consisting of a small but lovely piece of beefsteak which I divided into two portions, one for my supper and one for the morrow's breakfast. Asking Slab Cook to keep them for me in a cool place I started on my journey; my mount trippled the distance in three hours, but on returning I did not press him, so it was eight o'clock when I reached my quarters, tired and hungry. There I found Slab stretched out on his blankets covered with blood, his lips were cut, his nose flattened out, and he had my supper on one eye and my breakfast on the other.

It appeared that the bugler of the troop, who was a thickset bully, had picked a quarrel with Slab and in the ensuing fight had mauled the poor boy till he could neither stand up nor see, as both his eyes had been badly battered. The onlookers had stopped the fight, but the bugler told Slab that he intended to renew the fight the following day after he had sounded *réveillé*. He tried to keep his word, too, for first thing in the morning the door of our quarters was thrown open and in he dashed, saying: "Now then, Cook, out you come and we'll finish that fight." Before Slab could make any reply I said to the bully: "Say, if you are spoiling for a scrap, all right; both Cook and

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I will together tackle you right now in this room, and we'll kill you, you Beast—now *vætsack!*" (The Dutch word "*vætsack*" is used only when speaking to a dog and means "get out.") He *vætsacked.*

The reason that my bluff worked so promptly was this: I had casually mentioned to some of the fellows that when I was a schoolboy at Liverpool I had once shaken hands with Tom Sayers when he was touring the country with Heenan, the Benicia Boy, soon after their renowned fight; this gave rise in No. 7 Troop to the mistaken impression that I could use my fists, and the bully shared in the popular delusion, *hinc illæ lachrymæ.*

The noxiousness of the unloaded gun is recognized by the public when reading accounts of the innumerable fatalities that occur when empty (?) weapons and dangerous fools become mixed; but near-tragedies, narrow shaves, generally escape publication. In this ready-to-wear world that we live in, it is only the reformer putrid with conceit who believes that he can change human nature, and fashion it to resemble his own unlovely make-up; however, it can do no harm to record in these pages an incident that taught a good lesson to some half-dozen recruits that witnessed it. One afternoon I was visiting one of the larger barrack-rooms and saw one of the youngsters sitting on his cot engaged in rubbing an oil-rag over his pistol; he asked a man near him to observe how steadily he was able to hold his revolver while snapping it off by means of the trigger only (it was a double-action five-cylinder Webley); he aimed at the man's eye and snapped four times; he then aimed at a vinegar bottle that was standing on the ledge of the window overlooking the parade ground and pulled the trigger for

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the fifth time; there was an explosion, the bottle was shattered, and the bullet after crossing the parade ground entered the stables where it struck the wall between the heads of two of the troop horses.

During the two months that my little comrade Slab shared the small barrack-room with me he was most assiduous in taking stock of the methods and tricks used by a mounted man to make life in the veldt endurable; he acquired some knowledge of camp cooking, could vet his horse for minor ailments, and took considerable pride in his personal appearance; indeed, he went so far as to carry a silver-mounted whip, and to substitute for the spiked rowels of his spurs a couple of silver sixpenny pieces filed thin. I think that he did not learn this from me, still, he might have done so. I was rather good at making real American doughnuts, and when I tried one on Slab he was enchanted and begged me to make a batch for the two of us, so I agreed provided he would do the work of rendering out the required dripping. At the Cape there is a particular breed of sheep with abnormally large tails consisting almost entirely of fat; eight pounds weight of grease are often obtained from one tail. We borrowed a Kafir cook-pot and cutting a sheep's tail into small pieces placed them in the pot which we set on a small fire in the open fireplace of our room. That evening it was necessary for me to write some letters, so I left Slab to render out the fat and went to the troop reading room. I had nearly finished my correspondence when I heard the sentry discharge his carbine and shout, "Fire! Guard turn out." Something seemed to tell me that Slab had made a mess of it, so I was not surprised when, on running out of the reading room, I saw flames and smoke

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pouring out of the open door of my quarters. We soon subdued the fire, and as the building was of brick no great damage was done—but where was Slab? He was at the bar of the hotel in the village, sipping a glass of Pontac wine, jingling his spurs, slapping his leg with his riding whip, and whispering—you know.

With the approach of midsummer (December) the probability of Kafir disturbances increased. The tribal organization of the various divisions of the Bantus (Kafirs) was still in full force and Kaffraria was practically independent territory, so, though there were Resident Commissioners stationed with some of the more powerful chiefs, cattle lifting and small tribal fights were not uncommon. The Fingoes were to a certain extent under British protection, but they were held in contempt by the warlike Transkei Kafirs who looked on them as slaves or, at best, as wanderers who would seek work and Christianity in the Colony; many of them were rich in cattle and this alone was a great temptation to their traditional enemies. The annual "beer-drinkings" which were customary with all the tribes came off about Christmas-time, and it was then that the authorities expected trouble.

In the first week in December our troop was ordered to proceed to Kaffraria, so we put three days' rations in our saddlebags and left Fort Peddie. We marched about twenty-five miles a day, and on the morning of the third day, arrived soon after noon at our destination, Komgha.

This outpost consisted of a trading store, two or three private residences, an hotel, and the barracks of our artillery troop which consisted of some light

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field-pieces each drawn by six mules driven by native drivers who sat on the limber; the gunners were armed and mounted exactly the same as the rest of the F.A.M.P., their pay was sixpence a day more than ours, and they were trained and commanded by an officer of the Royal Artillery who was seconded for duty with our corps. They were permanently stationed in comfortable quarters at Komgha, so had an opportunity to put on more side than we did; they even had stable-forks and brooms, but the life was not one of adventure, so few men from the "duty" troops applied to be transferred to the gunners.

The barracks being only large enough to accommodate the artillery, we went into bivouac and as it was the rainy season we made for ourselves *tents d'abris* or patrol tents. Each man bought a strip of light drill ten feet long and three feet wide; two of these would be laced together side by side and thrown over a seven-foot ridge-string stretched between a couple of sticks two feet six inches high; the remaining three feet of drill formed the back and the door of the tent. It was close packing for two men with their saddlery, equipment, etc., but consideration for our horses when on the march induced us to make the tents as small and light as possible. Charlie Drummond Hay was my tent-mate, and he expressed the fear that such close proximity would result in our growing together like the Siamese twins, and that we should be shot for disobedience of orders at skirmishing drill when Dickie gave the command, "To six paces, extend." Possibly he exaggerated the danger, but it's a fact that when, a few years later, I went to the New Forest in Hampshire to enjoy the hospitality of his father, Colonel Drummond Hay, and was introduced

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to his sisters, I was received almost as Charlie's half-brother.

It was a regulation that out of our pay we should expend one shilling a day in supplying our horses with either mealies or oat-hay; this horse ration was hardly enough, in itself, to keep the horses in good condition, so they were turned out to graze on the veldt for as long as possible; at Fort Peddie they grazed all day, but now that there was a probability of their being employed on active service Inspector Nesbitt desired that they should put on extra flesh, so they were turned out to graze both night and day, guarded by two men on *horse-guard*, whose tour of duty was four consecutive hours.

In the Transkei, throughout December, it rained heavily three days out of four; the annual rainfall was forty inches, and most of this fell during the summer months, October to March, so Komgha was no pleasure resort. No greatcoat of waterproof (?) rubber-fabric exposed to heavy and continuous rain for four hours will keep the wearer dry; it may stand up to its work for a couple of hours, but after that it begins to wobble and soon becomes a case of down tools. It was a serious thing for us when patrol-jacket and riding-overalls became saturated with rain as it was impossible to get them dried-out in a reasonable time; fuel was scarce, and it was as much as we could do to make a small fire of cow-dung for cooking purposes. Fortunately, notwithstanding the rain the temperature was comfortably warm, so when going on horse-guard we would strip to the skin, don waterproof greatcoat, ankle-boots and forage cap, and report for duty. That queer sect in Manitoba, the Doukhobors, when marching to meet their Divinity on the prairie,

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might have appeared more picturesque than we did, but we were certainly entitled to second prize.

One night I was detailed for duty as horse-guard from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., so, as it was raining in torrents, I undressed for the duty, got into my waterproof, and joined Private Garratt, who was to share with me the four-hour watch. It was pitch dark, but we managed to grope our way to the grazing ground when the two men we were going to relieve gave a shout to apprise us of their whereabouts; when we stumbled upon them they greeted us joyfully.

"Sixty-four horses and two pack ponies," reported the senior man.

"Where?" I asked.

"All around; they were rounded-up at six o'clock and were all right. Want to count them?"

"No, I don't. Sixty-four horses and two pack ponies received correct," I acknowledged.

As the two relieved men splashed away in the direction in which they guessed the camp lay, Garratt and I seated ourselves on contiguous ant-hills and philosophized. Garratt was an Oxford 'Varsity man, so many of his remarks were clean over my head; it was too dark for us to see each other, but the human voice is, at times, great company, so I encouraged him to keep it up. An hour had slipped by when the rain gradually changed its character and the wall of blackness became slightly translucent; I could discern a faint pink nimbus which I rightly concluded was caused by the lights in the hotel bar not far from us. Telling Garratt to "stay put" on his ant-hill and to answer my whistles whenever he heard them, I made a bee-line for the hotel and entered the bar. The young lady who dispensed the liquors smiled cordially,

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and at my request placed a quart bottle of Pontac wine on the counter; the price was one shilling and sixpence, and by force of habit my hand sought the side-pocket of my breeches for the money. She tittered. I blushed, and asked if I could speak with Mr. ——, the proprietor. As a matter of course he agreed to give me credit till the following day, and the Pontac and I whistled our way back to Garratt on his ant-hill.

At midnight the rain was falling as heavily as ever, but we both felt contented with life; I, building castles in Spain and Garratt reciting all the poems that he had composed and published in book-form at Oxford; the time passed so quickly that we were agreeably surprised when we heard our two o'clock relief splashing, stumbling, swearing, and shouting as they approached us.

"Sixty-four horses and two pack ponies," I reported to the senior man.

"Where?" he asked.

"All around; they were rounded up at six o'clock and were all right. Want to count them?"

"Count your sister's cat's kittens! Sixty-four horses and two pack ponies received correct."

Garratt and I waded back to camp, and on regaining my shelter-tent I slipped out of the soaked waterproof and wriggled into the blanket beside my Siamese twin who awoke and said: "Hang it, Thompson, you feel like two yards of oysters on the half-shell; ease off to the right flank a bit."

Probably the rabid prohibitionists would have abused us roundly for having had recourse to the bottle of Pontac ("DEMON RUM" they would have miscalled it) to aid us in maintaining our vitality, but

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how would any of them, say Mrs. Carrie Nation, have appeared when after guarding horses for four hours, exposed to a pitiless rain, she had sought the shelter of her patrol tent?

I should like to have seen her.

When daylight arrived, there was not a horse to be seen, so all the troop turned out to search for them; just as we were starting, the poundmaster arrived in camp and reported that a farmer in the vicinity had found the horses on his lands and had impounded them. The pound fees were a shilling a head which each man had to pay, still no one blamed the horse-guard; Inspector Nesbitt himself paid for his charger and two pack ponies without a word of censure to us who had been on guard throughout the night, for he did not expect us to do impossibilities; he was too efficient an officer for that.

The action of the farmer in impounding our mounts was quite in keeping with that of his fellows who, ignoring the fact that we were there to protect their stock and to prevent the Kafirs from cutting their throats, would sting us to the limit when we had to buy forage or horses from them. We all tried to love our enemies, but in the process of evolution the Transkei farmer had not yet attained even the stage of *enemy;* like the Moneron he could move, assimilate food, and reproduce his kind, but he was not a lovable blob of protoplasm.

The Kafirs were keeping fairly peaceable, but we knew that directly a shot was fired in anger the British garrison from King would be moved down to the front and that we should probably be brigaded with them, so Inspector Nesbitt (or rather, "Dickie," as among themselves he was affectionately called by

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the men) began to handle the troop on more orthodox cavalry lines than heretofore; he insisted on punctuality being observed by the bugler in sounding camp calls, he was more particular about the grooming of the horses at *stables*, the camp guards had to be on the alert, and the sentry was required to walk his post in a brisk, soldierlike manner and to be prompt in paying the proper complimentary salutes, and he was made to understand that a sentry on his post is IT, what he says, goes; the system of countersigns from *Taps* to *réveillé* was even adopted.

Dickie, himself, had never been in the regular army, but his father had been in the service, so he was familiar with many features of British Army life. In a kindly manner he would instruct the men individually, and we often heard him express the hope that when the expected Brigadier-General arrived he would find that No. 7 Troop knew its work all right. Red tape became our best bet.

Late one night I was camp sentry posted about twenty yards at the back of Dickie's wall-tent; a shot rang out on the rocky hillside some quarter of a mile on our right flank. In compliance with standing orders I fired my carbine and called out the guard. It was brilliant moonlight and I could see all the men crawling out of their shelter-tents and standing to arms. Dickie came out in his pyjamas and slippers and walked down the lines, but as no further firing was heard he ordered the men to return to their tents. It was probably some tipsy Fingo full of Kafir beer who out of pure mischief had fired the shot. Dickie in returning to his tent approached my post, saying:

"Keep a sharp look-out, Thompson."

"Halt! Who goes there?" I yelled,

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"That's quite right, Thompson," he said, "keep a sharp look-out."

"Halt! Who goes there?" I yelled still louder.

"Yes, that's all right, Thompson," he replied, turning towards his tent.

"Halt! or I'll shoot!" I shouted, clicking my carbine to full-cock. "Halt! Once—Halt! Twice—Halt!——"

"Damn it, Thompson, hold on; er—er—*Commanding Officer.*"

"Advance, Commanding Officer, and give the countersign," I shouted, bringing my carbine to the *port.*

He shuffled up till I again halted him two paces from me, and I then craned forward, presenting my right ear (the proper military caper) to receive the whispered countersign; I could see his eyes twinkle as he said:

"Look here, Thompson, if you want that damned countersign you must ask Sub-Inspector Wilde for it. I don't know what it is."

The Kafirs did not break out that summer. It soon became evident that peace was assured for at least some months, so our troop was ordered back to Fort Peddie under the command of Sub-Inspector Wilde, and Inspector Nesbitt was called to head-quarters at King for a consultation with Commandant Bowker. About a week after we had shaken down into our old quarters Dickie rejoined us and we learned that he was about to be transferred to the command of No. 8 Troop at Kenhardt, Great Bushmanland, in the extreme north-west of the Colony and six hundred miles from Fort Peddie. Dickie did not ask any of

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our men to apply to be transferred with him, but it was hinted by Private Rowe, the troop clerk, that any man who wished could send his name in to the office, and it was possible that Dickie would arrange to have him transferred. The matter was freely discussed in the barrack-rooms; we learned that life in Great Bushmanland differed materially from that led in our part of the Colony, that grazing was excellent though water was very, very scarce, that the pay was a shilling a day more than we were receiving, and that No. 8 Troop consisted entirely of colonial men and a small squad of native scouts adepts at spooring, i.e. tracking.

During the next few days about twenty men sent in their names to be transferred, but neither Slab Cook nor my Siamese twin, Drummond Hay, cared to leave No. 7, so I sat tight. Towards the end of the week Rowe, the clerk, drew me aside and prefacing his talk with the remark that of course he could not betray any office secrets, proceeded to betray them. It seemed that Dickie had hinted that at Kenhardt there was a pair of silver-lace chevrons in stock which he thought might fit a man who would murder his superior officer merely because the latter didn't know what the countersign might happen to be. Rowe took my written application for transfer back with him.

The Government wished to obtain some information from Inspector Nesbitt, so he was directed to proceed to Cape Town while about twenty of us who had received our transfer to No. 8 began, in charge of a corporal, our march of six hundred miles.

Our progress was necessarily slow as the horses had, in a great measure, to be grass-fed; having passed

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through Somerset East we arrived at a farm about midway between that town and Graaf Reinet, and the corporal in charge decided that we should remain there for a whole day to give the horses a good rest. In the evening I took my horse to water at a small stream, and in returning to the bivouac I mounted bare-back, after putting a turn of the rein round the horse's jaw to guide and keep him at the walk. One of our younger men who was riding a properly bridled horse galloped up behind me and shouting, "Come on, I'll race you," dashed past me. I yelled to him to stop, but it was too late; my excited horse threw up his head, raced after the other for a short distance, then circled to the right and plunged head-first into a four-strand wire fence. I escaped with a bruised forearm, but my horse was badly cut on the head, shoulder, and leg; in fact, he was so badly crippled that when the farmer said he'd give me thirty shillings for him I jumped at the offer. I had paid twenty-two pounds for him at Peddie.

The following morning the detachment marched on, leaving me behind to purchase another mount. It was three days before I could find one at all suitable, and even then the one that I bought for seventeen pounds was hardly up to my weight; still, having been stable-fed he was in splendid hard-flesh condition.

Continuing my journey I entered a belt of country which had been subjected to a prolonged drought; it was some drought, too, for the farm dams had dried up, vegetation had disappeared, and nearly all transport wagons had ceased travelling through the district. The dust raised by the hoofs of one's mount was suffocating, and every one was sad except the *devils* which frolicked across the veldt all day. The South

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African *devil* is a small but powerful whirlwind some fifteen feet in diameter which comes from nowhere, but just happens; it takes you unawares like an expert hold-up man, and lifting bushels of dust, your hat, and all light movable trifles, valses away for a hundred yards or so, scatters its earnings over the veldt, calls it a day, and quits.

As there was no grazing, I was obliged to buy oat-hay for my horse at the farm-houses that I passed; the price was two shillings and sixpence a bundle, and as a horse's ration is from six to eight bundles a day, I realized that the "Mobility" for which our corps was famous was a costly virtue. Sometimes when I bought a bundle of oat-hay the farmer would fling in a bucket of water for my horse, but very often it was unobtainable. In one house that I entered for the purpose of obtaining a drink of water for myself, the housewife showed me a washtub full of soiled clothes and soapsuds that had lain there for four months; no rain had fallen for fifteen months and they were obliged to go two miles to obtain their domestic supply of water from some little water-pit which had not entirely given out. She told me that after an hour's ride I should arrive at a wayside hotel which fortunately had a good deep well containing enough water to supply all their customers. Cheered by this good news, I pushed on and arriving at the hotel drew a large bucket of water for my horse, put two bundles of oat-hay in front of him, and entered the bar where I got my own drink, consisting of a glass of water, the charge for which was threepence. There was nothing unusual in this, for then, and for several years afterwards, the bars in Kimberley invariably charged a *tickey* (threepence) a glass for water. After a square

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meal in the dining-room I was sitting on the stoep enjoying a pipe of Boer tobacco when to our amazement a sixteen-ox wagon lumbered up to the front of the hotel; the extraordinary circumstances that had induced the owner to drive his oxen through that feedless country have become erased from the tablets of my memory, but I saw him outspan his beasts, and as they wandered off he entered the hotel, and producing two pounds bought sixteen bundles of oat-hay, a mere mouthful for each ox. He placed the bundles separately in a line alongside the trek-chain and then collecting his animals turned them toward the wagon; seeing or smelling the hay, the oxen quickened their pace, but before they could reach the feed a *devil* developed, carrying every whisp of hay twelve feet into the air and scattering it over the dusty veldt. Some men laughed; to me it was tragedy.

Graaf Reinet was only about twenty miles further, so in the evening I arrived at an hotel on the outskirts of the town, and found that my troubles were over.

Nestling in the foot-hills of the Sneeuwberg range of mountains and built on the banks of the Sunday River, Graaf Reinet appears paradisical to the parched traveller who approaches it from the arid country that surrounds it. The river, whose source is in the mountain range to the north of the town, is fed by countless perennial springs, so, as it flows swiftly in several channels through the town, there is a bountiful and unfailing supply of water for all purposes. Each house stands in its own orchard, and when riding through the streets I saw on every side peaches, figs, apricots, grapes, nectarines, etc. The town lies in the north-east corner of the Great Karroo which, even in the driest season, affords splendid feed for sheep,

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horses, and goats, which thrive on the mimosa, stunted shrubs, wax-heath and roots, collectively called Karroo bush.

I could spare only one day and two nights to enjoy myself in this lovely spot as I was anxious to overtake my detachment which the head constable of the town police said was three days ahead of me, so having replenished my saddlebags with a supply of groceries, tobacco, and Boer-meal, I resumed my journey at sunrise and soon entered the pass threading the Sneeuwberg (Snow Mountain); on the right towered Compass Berg, the highest point in Cape Colony, having an altitude of 8500 feet above sea-level. By nine o'clock I had nearly come to the end of the pass and was emerging at the foot of the northern slope of the range when the ditty:

I can't forget the days when I was young, pippety-pom,

caught my ear and the next minute I slipped out of the saddle into the middle of my own crowd; the boys were lying sprawled about the veldt, basking south-side up in the hot sun, and listening to Private Hannam, comic vocalist and professional pianist. They had been there three days enjoying a well-earned rest. The horses, stuffed as full as bed-ticks with Karroo bush, just stood around and seemed to be musing.

The corporal in charge had gleaned much information about the route that was before us; running water was not to be expected and we should have to depend on water-pits, often at long distances apart; the days would be exceedingly hot, the thermometer from 90° to 100° Fahr. in the shade (there was no shade), but the nights would be cool and invigorating as the plateau extending to the Orange River was at an

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elevation varying from 2000 to 3000 feet; we should find excellent grazing in the bunch-grass growing in tufts separated by bare spaces, all the water slightly brackish, and goat-mutton very cheap and plentiful as the farmers, who led nomadic lives, possessed herds of considerable size. For the benefit of the horses it was decided that all our marching should be done at night.

At sunset we saddled up, halted at midnight for a couple of hours, and then rode on till we came to water, any time after dawn; each day the country proved drier and drier, and the day temperature hotter till we arrived at the village of Carnarvon, which lying at the foot of the eastern end of the Karree Bergen received from those mountains a copious supply of water. Wood for fuel was unobtainable, and as the ox-wagons going to Kimberley did not pass through the district, cow-dung, the standard fuel of the South African veldt, was very scarce. The farmers would construct two goat or sheep pens, but use only one at a time; when, in one of them, about six inches of manure had accumulated and been well trodden down, the second pen would be used; the manure was then dug out of the first pen in slabs about twelve inches square, and placed edgewise on the wall of the kraal to become sun-baked. The village bakery operated entirely with this fuel and it certainly turned out excellent bread.

Leaving Carnarvon, we followed the Olifants Vlei River, the bed of which was as dry as a bone, though in certain places wells that had been sunk in it furnished a supply of brackish water; these were known as water-pits.

At one of the pits we were informed that the next well containing an adequate supply of water was forty

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miles distant, all the intermediate pits having failed, so we lay over a day and a half to prepare the horses for the long march and then started very early in the evening, or rather, late in the afternoon. We did not off-saddle at midnight as usual, though we gave the horses several short rests. At sunrise we could discover no water-pit, so pushed on as quickly as the horses could walk as it was becoming uncomfortably hot; in about an hour we came across a small herd of goats in charge of a Griqua who told us that the well was about eight miles back on the trail that we had traversed. In the uncertain light of the dawn we had failed to see it, as being sunk in the dry bed of the river it was inconspicuous. We had marched that night forty-eight miles!

The saddles were taken off the horses which were sent back to the water in charge of two men, and the rest of us having bought all the goat's milk that the Griqua could squeeze out, cooked breakfast and spent the day with our heads under our saddles which each man placed as a roof on a small semi-circular wall of stones that he erected.

The following morning we were met by a six-mule wagon which had been sent from Kenhardt by Inspector Hoek, who was in command, Dickie who was to relieve him not having arrived from Cape Town. The Inspector, who had been years in the district, knew the difficulties so often encountered by travellers in the country, and had thoughtfully sent the wagon to assist us in the event of our having come to grief. The men got into the wagon with their saddlery, etc., and Private Hannam and I were detailed by the corporal to take charge of the horses and drive them by easy stages to Kenhardt, which was about two days'

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march further on; the wagon with its six fresh mules would cover the distance easily in five hours.

We were rather short of food but had a little coffee and Boer-meal left in our saddlebags, so we knew we should be all right.

That night we rode along very quietly, allowing the horses to nibble whenever they chose at the bunch-grass. Early the following morning we came to a large *vlei*, or shallow water, so we off-saddled and prepared to make some coffee in our patrol tins; a wild pigeon perched on a low bush about fifteen yards from us, so, as we were both hungry, I took a steady aim at it with my revolver and shot its head off. Leaving Hannam to pluck the bird I went down to the *vlei* where the horses were drinking, intending to round them up and drive them to some good grazing near our saddles; one old devil divined my intention and deliberately waded through the *vlei*, kicked up his heels in a derisive manner, and trotted away; the whole bunch followed his example.

Being on foot, it took me the whole day to round them up and drive them back to our off-saddle place; Hannam had seen me returning, and as I flung myself down on the veldt he, like a good comrade, brought me a tin full of hot coffee, a Boer-meal damper, and the pigeon which he had actually succeeded in baking in the lids of our two patrol tins luted together with a paste made of powdered ant-hill. I asked him why he had not eaten his half for breakfast, and he said that he had seen me in the distance chasing the horses and knew that after our night's ride the extra exercise would leave me pretty well played out, so it was only right that I should eat the whole pigeon, especially as it was I that shot it.

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It is such thoughtful, kindly little actions as this that have always made me feel the charm of army life. Of course, I insisted upon his sharing the supper with me, but he refused so persistently that at last I gave in and feasted by myself. With a sigh of repletion I lit my pipe, pillowed my head on the saddle, and gazed idly at the setting sun.

"Say! old man, how did you find the pigeon?" Hannam asked.

"Grand," I replied; "cooked to a turn; you are quite a club *chef*, though I wish it had been a turkey, for I'm still hungry."

Hannam put on the expression that he always assumed when singing his comic songs as he said:

"Well, it wasn't a turkey and it wasn't a pigeon. It was a crow. I shot it after you had left to get the nags. I felt so famished at breakfast that I ate the whole of the pigeon myself."

Kenhardt consisted of the District Commissioner's house, a gaol, two traders' stores, and the barracks of No. 8 Troop F.A.M.P. It was built on the right bank of the Great Hartebeest River, which seldom contained any running water, though by digging pits to a depth of three or four feet a good supply of slightly brackish water was always obtainable. On the four sides of a square piece of ground the men had built for themselves small wattle-and-daub huts accommodating two men each; these constituted the barracks. There was a brush kraal in which the horses were assembled for morning and evening *stables*, but they required no shelter as the climate permitted of their being turned out to grass both night and day; as for rain, it was as scarce as the teeth of a new-laid babe; about the

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month of April a few itinerant thunder-clouds might drop a little moisture here and there through Great Bushmanland, but it was no country for aquatic sports.

On our arrival Inspector Hoek excused us from all duty for seven days; we were not required to attend even roll-call. Hannam and I selected a vacant wattle-hut, and for three days we lay on our backs doing absolutely nothing except cooking our meals; we realized how completely we were worn down; seven weeks in the saddle is a severe strain on a man even though he be in the prime of life—we were all in. The remainder of the week we spent in redaubing the hut, dyeing our uniforms, and cleaning our accoutrements, while Hannam, at frequent intervals, informed the troop that he could not forget the days when he was young, pippety-pom.

Soon after we had returned to duty Inspector Nesbitt arrived from Cape Town, relieving Inspector Hoek of the command of the troop, and, in addition, assuming the office of District Commissioner. It soon became apparent that the troop was to be trained so as to bring it more in uniformity with the other troops of the corps, especially as regards discipline, drill, and fitness to operate in harmony with other mounted organizations. One or two of the old non-commissioned officers were transferred with Inspector Hoek to a troop stationed on the Kaffrarian border, and a few of the men too enamoured of the old free and easy conditions of service to learn new tricks were, at their own request, given their discharges. This shake-up caused a two-stripe silver-lace chevron to appear on my arm, and within a month a further seismcgraphical disturbance passing through the troop

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induced Dickie to address me as "Sergeant"; maybe, the good man was too busy to realize what he was saying, or perhaps he hated to run the risk of my doing sentry-go near his quarters when he didn't know the countersign; anyhow, he ordered the promotion to be notified in Orders and let it go at that.

The drilling of the troop, which was entrusted to me, was kept up till Dickie was satisfied that the men (and horses) were sufficiently proficient, and then we resumed the work that the exceptional condition of the district demanded. Small parties of four or five men would be sent out in different directions to patrol the banks of the Orange River opposite Korannaland, and the country lying to the west and east of Kenhardt; others would visit the pits and *vleis* around which the nomadic flock-owners, both Dutch and native, would be encamped. When a shower of rain fell in any particular place a patrol would be sent there, as the farmers would trek to it from all directions so that their animals, which were chiefly goats, could get the benefit of the fresh grass which sprang up with remarkable rapidity directly rain fell.

Our utility consisted chiefly in showing ourselves, as but little goat stealing or cattle lifting occurred, but if we had not been in the country, Korannas, wandering Hottentots, and Bushmen from the Kalahari Desert, which was only fifty miles distant, would have plundered to the limit.

With reference to the sprouting of the bunch-grass after rain has fallen, I here seriously and emphatically assert that in that favoured country you can hear the grass grow; this is not a figurative statement nor a tarradiddle. It was soon after my arrival at Kenhardt when talking to Mr. Taute, the trader,

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that I remarked that the tufts of bunch-grass though old, sun-baked, and blown prone on the ground, seemed to be magnificent feed for our horses. He said, "Just wait till we get some rain and then you will hear the new grass growing"; my private opinion of him was the same as yours is of me. The rain came, and one scorching day about a week afterwards Taute took me out on the veldt some three hundred yards from the camp so that no noise would disturb us; following his directions I lay down and placed my right ear on the ground; I distinctly heard scores of faint "tickings" sounding all around me. Whether they were caused by the separation of the articulations of the stems of the grass, or by grains of sand being thrust aside by the heads of the sprouting grass, I do not know; probably both causes were operating, but I heard the grass grow all right.

Taute and I became great friends, and he invited me to accompany him in a four-ox Scotch cart on a week's trip along the Orange River, as he wished to visit some of his customers on business. I easily obtained a week's leave, so slipping into a suit of civilian linen clothes I went to his store to join him. He suggested that it was a pity for me to mess up my pretty glad rags on the veldt, why not wear my old uniform? I did as he suggested and we started on a most enjoyable trip. The oxen were splendidly trained and would travel either at a walk or a trot as Taute and his whip ordered. I learned a lot on that journey. For instance: the first evening when we were preparing supper we found that a supply of baking powder for the rooster-koek (griddle cake) had been overlooked. Taute said it was no matter, we could cut open a rifle cartridge and use the powder,

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that would raise it. Of course I had to smile politely at my host's wit, but after he had mixed a thin dough of Boer-meal and fashioned it into a disc, he sprinkled it with gunpowder, put on another disc of dough as a lid, and placed it on the red-hot embers of the fire; presently, one after another, the grains of powder caught fire and fizzled inside the cake. It tasted all right, and though it was not quite as light as mother used to make, it was not half bad; each grain of powder in exploding had left a little air-cell in the *koek*.

Whenever we came to a water-hole we found several flock-owners camped round it, with their sheep and goats browsing on the herbage in the neighbourhood. The Boer farmers generally had wall-tents pitched beside their wagons, while the native farmers occupied their ramshackle wagons furnished with canvas half-covers supported on wooden bows. Occasionally we came across a two-room farm-house built of sun-dried brick and having a galvanized iron roof, but in such a case the land would be owned by the farmer who frequently had improved his farm of six thousand acres by constructing a dam and putting up stone kraals for the cattle.

It was interesting to watch a large flock of sheep as, towards evening, the Bushman or the Hottentot herder brought it to the water-hole. The sheep would be driven into a brush enclosure and counted by the owner; sometimes one or two of them would be missing and the farmer would say so to the Hottentot boy who would then carefully scrutinize the sheep in his charge; he would admit that they were not all there—"Bleskop" and "Stump-tail" were absent and he would go and find them. The Hottentot could

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not count up to more than eight or ten, so numbers meant nothing to him, but he had given a name to every sheep in the flock and could recognize them all as we do our acquaintances.

Taute found many of his customers along the banks of the Orange River, some in tents and some in small farm-houses. We were always hospitably received and were given the cup of unsweetened weak coffee which in South Africa is universally tendered to a visitor, the coffee kettle being kept by the side of the cook fire from dawn till supper-time. Sojourners at the Orange River invariably added a pinch of salt to their cup of coffee as, without it, they missed the flavour given by the brackish water to which they were accustomed. In drinking the water at the river I, myself, found it very flat and insipid, as even in the few months that I had been in Great Bushmanland my palate had become inured to the taste of brackish water. When sheep were perforce pastured on the banks of the river they speedily became *maar* (thin) and would not pick up till they returned to their native water pits.

Taute transacted a lot of business, sometimes with the ould Baas, at others with the *vrouw*, but as my knowledge of the *taal* was very limited I would pass the time in looking over the horses and the trek-oxen. We had been away five days and had reached an encampment just forty miles from Kenhardt when our oxen strayed away; Taute borrowed a horse, but it was a whole day before he found the animals and brought them back to the cart late in the evening; in twenty-four hours my leave would expire and I felt sore at the prospect of overstaying it, but Taute assured me that he would get me back on time. We

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inspanned and began our homeward trek; the trotting oxen covered the forty miles in twenty-four hours and saved me from having A.W.L. recorded against me.

Taute asked me to come to his store in half an hour and have supper with him. I was punctual, and found in the living-room a table burdened with such a spread: steaming soup, a roast korhaan (a kind of wild turkey), cheese, Huntley and Palmer's mixed biscuits, a plate of candies, four bottles of beer, and a box half full of cigars. When the smoking time arrived Taute said:

"Well, Thompson, on this trip I have collected a hundred and thirty-two pounds, seven shillings and sixpence, thanks to you."

"To me?"

"Yes, all those goat-milkers and ox-skinners that we have been hunting up hadn't paid their store bills for months and months. I couldn't get a penny out of them, so on this trip I told them that the District Commissioner had sent you round with me to pinch them if they didn't pay quick, quick. Uniform is better than glad rags on the veldt. Fill up."

The winter months, May, June, and July—the pleasantest in the year—passed quickly, as our duties were easy and often interesting; we were on excellent terms with the Boer and Afrikander farmers, and as "The man that hath no music in himself" is a rare bird in Africa the nights were filled with melody of sorts. Every youth, White, Griqua, and Baastard (half-breed), possessed a cheap German concertina and the constant strain of:

Vat yo goet en trek, Perreira,
Vat yo goet en loop,

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seemed to be a part of the scenery; even Hannam's "Pippety-pom" failed in the persistency race to be first past the post, though it always came in a good second. Then there was dancing; how the girls loved it! For many moons there was secreted in one of the divisions of my cartridge-belt a treasured note written on a blank sheet of paper torn from the annual almanac advertising Lydia Beecham's Green Pills; it read: "Dear Sergeant Thompson, Do come over to-night, we have had the stoep freshly smeared, and Michael has brought home a new concertina." For a thorough understanding of this invitation it must be explained that the farm-houses never had board floors; the substitute was composed of a mixture of powdered ant-heap and bullock's blood spread over the earth to a thickness of about four inches; when this had become dry, a stiff wash of cow-dung and water was "smeared" over it; this gave an astonishingly hard and serviceable floor. A fastidious housewife would have the smearing renewed once a week.

About this time reports from every part of South Africa arrived announcing that the natives were becoming restless and belligerent; Transkei, Kafirs, Zulus, Basutos, and other tribesmen in the East were showing signs of hostility, indicating that they contemplated accomplishing their century-old ambition to "Drive the white man into the sea." The Transkei seemed to be the principal danger spot, so strong patrols of our corps were sent into the Galeka country lying between the Kei and the Bashee Rivers; on the 26th September the Galekas under Chief Kreli at Gadwana Hill attacked our men who were accompanied by a detachment of the artillery troop and a contingent of Fingoes; Inspector Von Hohenen and

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several men were killed, our guns were nearly captured, and the patrol was driven back to Ibeka.

Thus began what was officially termed the ninth Kafir war.

Imperial troops, Volunteer corps, Fingo levies, F.A.M.P., and a Naval Brigade from H.M.S. *Active* were hurried to the front; they established head-quarters at Ibeka, and commenced operations.

Towards the end of December it became evident that the Gaikas under Chief Sandilli intended to rise and join the Galekas; the Government saw it was necessary to call upon every available man in the Colony to join the forces, and on 29th December, 1877, Inspector Nesbitt received telegraphic orders that No. 8 Troop was to proceed by forced marches to the Front.

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Chapter V

THE GAIKA-GALEKA WAR

On the morning of the 30th December we began our march. Being on active service we were placed on the same footing as other troops in the field, receiving free rations and forage which saved us from spending out of our pay about two shillings and sixpence a day. We were accompanied by a six-mule wagon which carried our valises and a reserve supply of horse-feed to be used only when forage could not be bought at places where we made a midnight halt; it was, however, only during the first few days of the journey that it was found necessary to draw on this reserve.

As the march that we made was regarded as remarkable and was favourably commented upon by both the public and the military authorities, it may be well here to record a few details as to the treatment that was given to the horses on the journey. Inspector Nesbitt, who was a consummate horse-master, insisted on the following routine being observed: the day's march would begin at 4 a.m.; at 6 a.m. a halt would be made for exactly thirty minutes, during which period the saddles would be taken off and the horses encouraged to roll; at 8 a.m. two hours' halt took place, enabling the men to cook breakfast and feed the horses; at noon a four hours' rest began, the horses were given an unlimited supply of oat-hay, and the march resumed at 4 p.m.; at 6 p.m. a two hours'

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halt was made to feed horses and cook coffee; at 10 p.m. there was a thirty minutes' off-saddle; and at midnight came the end of the day's work, when we had four whole hours to cook supper, feed horses, and sleep.

This programme was rigorously followed for nineteen consecutive days and eighteen nights.

It will be seen that the horses were under saddle eleven hours out of the twenty-four, but never for more than two hours at a stretch; in no circumstances were they allowed to go faster than at a walk. Four times a day they were lavishly fed on the very best forage obtainable—generally the tops of bundles of oat-hay cut fine with a sickle, the stems being discarded; this feed in unlimited quantity can safely be put in front of horses, whereas when mealies are used care must be exercised that the animals be neither overfed nor watered at improper times.

When we arrived at Victoria West we received the news that the Gaikas under Sandilli had actually risen and joined the Galekas, and that throughout the Colony Volunteer Mounted Corps were being speedily organized and despatched to the Front. As nearly every man in the country owned a horse and a rifle it did not take long for a troop to be formed by the District Commissioners; wound round a cowboy hat a puggaree of some distinctive colour marked the town or district to which the troop belonged, and a silk guidon worked by the ladies of the community would often be carried.

Eight young fellows wished to join our troop for the period of the war, so the Inspector took them on as supernumeraries, and within an hour they were fitted out with the necessary horse-furniture, blanket,

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and a day's rations, and when we resumed our march, fell in as the rear sections of the troop.

I was detailed for the next week to give them some instruction in drill, etc., while we were on the march; as they were bank clerks, store assistants, and men with some education they quickly picked up enough of the routine work to pass muster; still, being town men and physically soft, they found the hardships incidental to veldt travelling rather hard to bear. They had been with us two days when we made our midnight halt in a pass threading the mountains where, owing to the altitude, the temperature was rather low; I had spread my blanket on the softest bit of road-bed I could find when one of the recruits suggested that if he and I put our blankets together it would be warmer sleeping; I disliked the plan, but as the poor devil's teeth were chattering I told him to arrange the two blankets to suit himself, and went off to attend to my horse. On my return I found he had already turned in, so placing the butt of my carbine under my head to form a comfortable pillow I lay down.

"Ain't you going to take your spurs off, Sergeant?" he said.

"No fear, we have only three hours to sleep."

"But, Sergeant, I can't sleep with a man with his spurs on."

I snatched away my blanket and carbine and sought a spot where there was no chattering recruit.

Towards the end of the journey the horses were still in fairly good form, but the men were half dead with fatigue and want of sleep; conversation dropped to a minimum; I found that even to *think* was an exertion, and had it not been for pencil and notebook

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I should have lost all account of time. Every now and then a man, momentarily asleep, would fall forward on his horse's neck but would instantly recover his position. I have never known a man fall to the ground.

At midnight on the 18th January we arrived and halted at the bridge spanning the river on the outskirts of King Williamstown.

We had marched *six hundred miles in nineteen days*—thirty-two miles a day.

One or two of the horses were a little leg-weary, but there was not a sore back in the troop; as an indication of the condition of the horses it may be here mentioned that after four days' complete rest at King we went directly into the field.

The High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, who was then at King, expressed the wish to "See the troop that has made that wonderful march," so in a day or two No. 8 was paraded and inspected by Sir Bartle. The Press of the Eastern Province printed complimentary notices, and Cape Town also heard of what we had done. The reputation of Inspector Richard A. Nesbitt, commanding the troop, stood higher than ever in the estimation of the members of the Government at Cape Town.

Reverting to the time when we dismounted at the bridge, Inspector Nesbitt went into the town to report at head-quarters, and receive orders as to where we were to take up our quarters; the town was full of troops: horse, foot, and artillery—regulars, Volunteers, and burghers; every building was fully occupied, so after waiting for about an hour we were told to bivouac on the near-by grassy bank of the river. When daylight came I found myself com-

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pletely crippled by an attack of sciatica brought on by the cold breeze blowing down the river while we were standing by our horses on the bridge. I couldn't even turn myself over on my blanket; of course, the men reported my condition, but what with the constant arrival and departure of troops, and the receiving and caring for the wounded from the Front, every one in authority was too busy to pay any attention to me. It was after sunset when having endured a day's horrible pain I began to use language; naughty words commenced to flow freely from me and they became naughtier and naughtier; I fear they were even approaching the profane, but they were effective, for after a while an empty sixteen-ox wagon drew up alongside of me; on to it I was loaded and it creaked away to the civil town hospital which happened to have a vacant bed in which I soon found myself.

Trained nurses had not been invented in those days, so my pain-racked body was not soothed by any ministering angel flumping on the bed, sticking her elbow into my stomach, and saying "Sit up and drink this," but the hospital steward pulled off my breeches and saying that the doctor would be round at eight o'clock the following morning, turned to leave me. Now, I had had no food for more than twenty-four hours, so I asked the steward for something to eat; no, it was past supper-time, so I could not have any; I explained why I was hungry and said that a glass of milk and some bread and butter was all that I needed; no, the kitchen was closed; well, could he hunt me up a crust of bread and a glass of water? no, there wasn't any. I asked him to take a shilling out of my breeches' pocket and send some one out to the baker's to buy a loaf for me; no, there was no one to send.

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I spent a sleepless night trying to be good; I recalled to mind all the beautiful sentiments I had come across in books and on monuments in a cemetery: "To know all is to forgive all." "Man sees the deed, God the circumstance." "Turn the other cheek." "*Thou* knowest," surmounted by a sculptured hand with the forefinger pointing heavenward. "To forgive is divine," etc., but somehow it seemed to me that the gifted authors of these lovely aphorisms had in mind only the ordinary human transgressions such as murder, robbery, and arson; they had never met that hospital steward.

In the morning the doctor arrived and dexterously cross-cut and cupped my back, taking a few ounces of blood from me. The pain ceased as if by magic, so I enjoyed an adequate breakfast, and revelling in the clean sheets and deliciously soft bed I felt at peace with all the world—bar one.

The following afternoon Rowe, the troop clerk, came to give me my month's pay; he told me that Sir Bartle Frere had just inspected our troop, which was to march on the morrow to Cathcart, fifty miles to the north of King. I asked Rowe to wait a few minutes for me so that he could assist me with his arm as I intended to accompany him back to camp; I still limped considerably. While I was dressing, the hospital steward entered the ward and asked what was I doing? I told him I was returning to my troop, but he said that was impossible as I had not been "Registered out" of hospital. Being on my legs once more I was not going to stand any of his nonsense, so I told him to run away and play. Realizing that he could not stop me, he got his register to enter sundry particulars about me; in answering his questions I

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amused myself by making absurd statements, many of which he duly entered before discovering that I was playing the fool; had he entered them all the hospital register would have shown that I was born in Clover; age, over seven; parents, none; sex, female; single; children, four; Member of the Church of Former Night Devils. It must be remembered that it was not a military hospital; I had been sent there because it contained the only vacant bed in the garrison; presumably the military authorities paid the town for my accommodation.

I wish to record the fact that the doctor was very kind and considerate, and that his medical treatment of me was excellent as my rapid recovery proved.

I reported to Inspector Nesbitt as fit for duty, but he wouldn't be bluffed; he said that I must remain at King four more days, when the Tarkastadt troop of Volunteers would be leaving for Cathcart with several wagons, in one of which I could travel comfortably; my horse, which was a valuable one well up to my weight, was to be led without saddle with the pack-animals to our troop. I told him that the town civil hospital was no place for one of his men and mentioned how supperless they had left me the night I was admitted, so he gave me leave of absence till the Tarkastadt troop should be ready to leave, and I put up at the hotel.

A few words must now be said to explain how affairs stood when I was "taking mine ease at mine Inn." When the war commenced in September, Commandant Griffiths, in command of the Colonial Forces, entered Galekaland and attacking Kreli burnt his kraal and drove the Galekas eastward to the Bashee River, but on 30th December, when they were joined by the

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Gaikas under Sandilli, they returned to the Kei. By this time General Sir A. Cunnynghame, K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, had established his head-quarters at Ibeka on the northern border of Galekaland where was assembled a strong force of regulars, F.A.M.P., Volunteers, Fingo levies, burghers, and a Naval Brigade from H.M.S. *Active*, with artillery, rocket tubes, and ample military stores. At the time of our arrival at King, Colonel Glyn of the 24th Regiment, who commanded the troops operating in the Transkei, began moving three parallel columns of troops through Galeka territory; he took personal command of the centre column, the left column was commanded by Captain Upcher, and the right column by Major Hopton; Major Elliott's force on the Bashee moved in co-operation with the left column.

Meanwhile the Gaikas under Sandilli raided Fingoland, burning the house of Mr. Ayliff, the Resident Commissioner, also the school house, hotel, and farmhouses. They then attempted to cut our communications on the road between King and Komgha where some F.A.M.P. under Major Moore, and forty men of the Connaught Rangers, after two days' fighting, succeeded in driving them off. Although many of the Gaikas were operating with Kreli's Kafirs in Galekaland the main body took to the fastnesses above the Kei and Kabousie Rivers and so were isolated from other branches of the tribe, such as the Oba, Anta, and Siwani. There was great danger of their moving westward to the Amatola Mountains and stirring up the Kafirs as far west even as the Fish River and Lower Albany, so our troop had been ordered to Cathcart to intercept them if they attempted to slip through, and to assist in driving them out of the strong positions

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they occupied on the precipitous right bank of the Kei.

There was considerable friction between the Cape Government and the Imperial authorities, Minister Molteno, the Premier, being opposed to the employment of Imperial troops in the war. His sentiments were the same as those of most South Africans, who were convinced that the training, equipment, and organization of the British Army were not suitable for Kafir warfare; their arguments were based on the experience of former years, and subsequently, when the end of the decade arrived, they claimed that events had proved that their judgment had not been amiss. This state of affairs continued till March, when Sir Bartle Frere directed that General Sir A. Cunnynghame should be placed in command of Volunteers, burghers, and F.A.M.P. as well as the regulars in the field; thereupon Mr. Molteno's Ministry resigned and Sir Gordon Sprigg formed a new Government.

Our veteran chief, Commandant Bowker, who had commanded the F.A.M.P. for a great many years was no longer young enough for active service in the field, so when hostilities began he was retired on pension and Commandant Griffiths was appointed to succeed him. In the interests of uniformity in the organization of the Colonial Force our Inspectors received the rank of Captain, a change which foreshadowed the conversion a few months afterwards of the Frontier Armed Mounted Police into the Cape Mounted Riflemen.

To resume the account of my personal experiences: when the Tarkastadt troop was ready to leave King I reported to Captain Von Bart, who was in command,

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and then went to his wagon-train to pick out a comfortable place in which to travel; one of the ammunition wagons was not quite full, having a little space between the top of the load and the wagon-tent, so selecting it as my Pullman sleeping berth I fitted it up luxuriously with a horse-blanket, a bundle of hay stolen from a forage wagon, and my cavalry valise for a pillow; I even went so far as to furnish a private bar with a roll of Boer tobacco and a bottle of Pontac. "I ain't by nature proud, but I felt a reg'lar Hearl," as I surveyed my drawing-room *de luxe*.

The troop consisted of about forty men, nearly all Dutch burghers from the district round Tarkastadt; Captain Von Bart was an attorney-at-law and the District Commissioner had selected him to command the troop as he could speak English and was the most influential man in their small town. He worked hard to qualify himself for his new duties but, naturally, ten days barely suffice to convert a village lawyer into a master tactician, though I have met scores of persons who differ from me on this point. In one respect his military knowledge equalled, even if it did not exceed, that of any member of the Field Force—he knew his deficiencies.

The order "trek" was given; we marched out of town in bunch formation, and the band (two native wagon drivers) on their concertinas struck up the National quick-step:

Vat yo goet en trek, Perreira.

At our first outspan Captain Von Bart called a public meeting at which he explained that although the troop was entitled to a lieutenant none had as yet been appointed; he moved that Troop Sergeant-major

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Smuts be promoted to the vacancy; those in favour say "Ja" (every one Ja-ed); the contrary? (silence); Mynheer Smuts, you're lieutenant. Now, as I was born an arrant humbug I determined to be the first to offer congratulations, but Smuts knew but little English and my knowledge of the *taal* was still less; however, I got over the difficulty by advancing towards him as he stood surrounded by a ring of burghers, and coming to the salute in my best military manner I said: "Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant, Lieutenant." He didn't know what I was talking about (nor did I exactly), but he seemed pleased; he raised his cowboy hat and turned the colour of its puggaree, which happened to be red. At the next outspan I was invited to be an honorary member of the officers' mess.

The following morning when we were on the march (trek, I mean) Captain Von Bart galloped back to my wagon and told me that a lot of soldiers, sailors, and cannon were coming down the road in our direction, what should he do? Jumping from the wagon, I saw a detachment of the Naval Brigade from H.M.S. *Active* marching along the road towards us; it was about a quarter of a mile distant. I told the captain that as they were Imperials they had the right of way, so he must draw-up on one side of the road and look pleasant while they passed. It was a new one on him, so he asked me to mount his horse and get his bunch straightened out, the men would treat me as a little commandant till we got out of the fix. I could see that even if we halted, the Imperials would be on us in less than ten minutes; there was no time to lose, so jumping into the saddle I galloped at the head of bunch, stopped them, and hustled them off the road.

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The burghers caught on very quickly, and formed in line more or less straight; I waved to Von Bart to get our wagons drawn up behind the line. I judged that we still had five minutes to spare, so borrowing a gun from one of the troop I, by pantomime, instructed the men sufficiently in the manual of arms to enable them to bring their carbines (?) to the *advance* and to the *carry* as soon as they heard the appropriate shout. In two minutes they were as perfect as they ever will be. The Naval men came rolling along led by an advance guard of eight men of the Royal Marine Artillery in charge of a sergeant; they were marching at ease, pipes alight, and seemed to be somewhat amused at our appearance, especially when they detected that each man wore only a single spur, as is the universal custom with the burghers. When the advance guard was nearly abreast our right flank I yelled, "Troop, 'shun, carry 'ums"; the sergeant started and looked up at me as if he had caught me kissing his best girl; however, in a moment or two he recovered his senses, brought his guard to attention, and returned our compliment; the main body of the detachment followed suit as it marched past us. When the show was over Von Bart emerged from under the cover of one of the wagons, and as he remounted his horse said: "Allemachte Kerl! I should never have thought of *that*."

Arriving at Cathcart I rejoined my troop which occupied army bell-tents lined with green baize, pitched in front of a large commissariat store; a stone magazine stood on our left flank. The town itself consisted of the magistrate's residence and court-house (the *drotsdy*), a prison, hospital and a few private residences; on the outskirts stood Beck's trading store.

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Being on the main road between Queenstown and King there was a constant stream of troops of Colonial Horse, Fingo levies, and commissariat wagons passing through. The garrison was an important one as it was the centre of the country between the Kei and the Amatola Mountains, in which the Gaikas were operating; strong columns composed of various corps would be sent out in different directions, while others that had been patrolling for a week or two would return to rest and refit. Wagons could not accompany the troops as the Kei country was nothing but a mass of mountains, precipices, cañons, and stretches of impenetrable bush; spare ammunition and surgical appliances were carried on pack-horses, and as large numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats were captured from the enemy the men could manage very well as long as they had any coffee and tobacco left in their saddlebags.

The most unpleasant feature of our camp life was the plague of vermin which afflicted us—the cootie in modern phraseology; tents, blankets, buildings, and the very ground swarmed with them, and it was, to me, an astonishing fact that the cleaner a man happened to be the more they bit him. After being on patrol for a few days where there was no time nor opportunity for bathing, of course one would not have what the advertisement calls, "A skin you love to touch," and then the insects would cease worrying; they, like the poor, would still be with us all right, but they seemed fed up with us. On our return to Cathcart we used to go to a lovely cascade of water falling into a large natural basin about a quarter of a mile from camp; after bathing we would don a completely fresh suit of apparel, and on the

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point of a long stick carry back to camp the clothes we had been wearing and dump them into a copper of boiling water; in half an hour we were again being eaten alive. It is not a pleasant subject, but neither is war.

On our first patrol we left camp late in the afternoon in a pouring rain, and following a trail which led to a saddle in a range of hills running north and south we soon found that we were in touch with the enemy, as we could see Gaika scouts watching our movements from the sides of the mountains which flanked us. It was growing dark when we came across a small party of Kafirs camped at the mouth of a rugged ravine; they threw a few assagais and fired one or two of their noisy, harmless guns at us, but directly we dismounted and fired a volley they turned and bolted up the ravine, leaving one of their number dead, shot through the head.

Captain Nesbitt decided to bivouac here for the night, so the horses were unsaddled, a feed of mealies given them, and they were linked-up; a stream of water was running out of the ravine and we went to fill our patrol-tins; in doing so we passed the body of the Griqua that had been killed; to my disgust, one of the men tore the scanty clothing off from the body and spat upon it; this was the mildest of the many regrettable incidents that I subsequently witnessed, so nothing more need be said about it. It rained heavily all night, but as we lay on sloping ground the water did not form pools round us, so we managed to keep warm in our soaked blankets and waterproof greatcoats. At sunrise the weather cleared and we proceeded in a southerly direction along a valley; from the steep hillsides on our flanks an occasional

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shot would be fired at us by some Griqua concealed behind the rocks, and whenever one of us caught sight of a Kafir he would jump from his horse and take a pot shot.

The Griquas were armed principally with five or six throwing-assagais, but a few of them had long-barrelled muzzle-loading guns of very large calibre; ammunition was very scarce with them, so in place of bullets they would occasionally load up with a leg broken from one of their cast-iron tripod cook-pots; in its flight this would howl exactly like the syren of a steamboat; if it happened to strike you end-on it might penetrate to some extent, but when, as was generally the case, its side struck you in the body you would be knocked down and feel sure that something had hit you, but the damage would not be great. As regards the throwing-assagai, we found that in accuracy of aim and range it was about the same as that of a small revolver held in the *unsupported* hand of the average white man; up to fifty yards it was fairly reliable, beyond that the betting was a hundred to one against and no takers; the difference between the two weapons was this, an assagai could be seen during its flight and it could often be dodged, a bullet couldn't.

At a bend in the valley we came upon a party of Griquas who did not know that we were approaching; when they saw us they sent a shower of assagais at us and like monkeys sprang up the mountain side, but one of them stood and firing his immense gun sent a pot-leg howling over our heads; one of our men galloped to within ten feet of him and sprang from his horse; the Griqua had put a fresh charge of powder into his gun, but had no time to ram it home, nor

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to drop another pot-leg down the barrel, so he just blazed away the blank charge into the man's face; a few seconds afterwards the man was cutting a notch in the small of the stock of his carbine.

Soon after this we saw a large party of Kafirs on the top of a mountain facing us so we dismounted and with the bridles over our arms, towed our horses after us as we picked our way up the boulder-strewn mountain side; on our arrival at the summit we saw that the Griquas had descended the opposite side and were half-way up another mountain, so we led our horses down to the foot of the range that we had ascended and commenced climbing them up that which the Griquas were climbing; when we gained the top of that we found that exactly similar conditions again presented themselves. In fact, throughout the campaign at least half the time was occupied in the sport of mountain climbing; to this day membership in an Alpine club is not one of my ambitions.

It was the hottest part of the year, so we found it exhausting work, and the occasional howl of a pot-leg or the clink of an assagai striking near-by boulders ceased to interest us as much as the pain in the muscles of our legs and the intolerable thirst which could be assuaged only when we came to streams in the valleys that we crossed.

Once as we were just preparing to climb one of those vile mountain ranges one of the men, who must have been a Scot, stripped off his riding breeches and leggings, and strapped them to the pommel of his saddle; it made him conspicuous, and as we struggled up through the masses of rock-slide and fallen timber every man began thinking out appropriate gibes to pelt at him; he merely grinned and lifted his remaining

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garments, presumably to allow the circumambient air to refresh him; after a while it was noticed that he appeared to be the least fatigued of any of the bunch: gibes ceased, every single man except Captain Nesbitt strapped his breeches and leggings to his saddle, and when we halted at the top of the mountain we were comparatively as fresh as paint. From that day forth No. 8 Troop when fighting in the mountains was garbed even as a Highland infantry regiment—only less so.

For about a week we kept up this work of sniping and climbing; we captured a few goats and Kafir ponies, and burnt some grass huts, but we remained only on the fringe of the strong Griqua positions as Captain Nesbitt had ordered out the patrol merely to enable us to learn what we could of the country in which we were about to operate, and the methods of the Griquas; his idea was to prepare us for more serious fighting.

We returned to Cathcart where we were soon joined by a large force of burghers under Commandant Frost which had been operating in the country round the Umgwali and Kabousie Junction; an engagement had been fought at Mardenaar's Kop near the Kei River, where a hundred of the enemy had been killed and 435 head of cattle and 16 horses captured; our losses were small as assagais and blunderbusses are no match for breech-loading rifles, except, of course, in cases where the crass ignorance and criminal negligence of commanding officers invite disaster and at times lead to the annihilation of the troops.

In our next raid into the enemy's territory we had a force of about eight hundred men comprising a large commando of burghers under Commandant

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Frost, the Queenstown mounted contingent, our troop, and a mob of Fingoes under a white leader. We left Cathcart at dawn and proceeding in the direction of the Kabousie soon came in touch with a large party of Griquas occupying a bushy flat between two ranges of hills; we deployed and extending in skirmishing order, dismounted and opened fire. Thick bush, fallen timber, and outcrops of rock afforded cover for both sides and the Kafirs offered a stout resistance for a considerable time, but at last they fell back to the foot of one of the hills which they commenced to climb; they had probably exhausted their supply of assagais and powder. Our Fingoes who were well acquainted with the country reported that there was a cattle trail running directly up the hill, so we reformed column and galloped to the foot of it. The ascent proved so easy that it was not necessary to dismount, though the pace was reduced to a walk. The burghers led the column and our troop was told-off as rear-guard. About half-way up the hill there was a small open space which was sparsely timbered, and here a very old Kafir woman was sitting with her back resting against a tree-trunk close to the trail. I was riding in front of our leading half-section beside Private Timothy Healy, No. 8 Troop F.A.M.P., who subsequently became Governor of Kimberley Gaol. About ten yards in front of us we saw a man belonging to the Queenstown contingent leave his place in the column and ride up to within three feet of the old woman; a shot rang out and a "regrettable incident" had occurred; I galloped up to the head of the column and reported what I had seen to Commandant Frost and Captain Nesbitt who was riding at his side,

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On arriving at the top of the hill we found it clear of the enemy who, however, were in force on a hill opposite at a distance of four hundred yards; at least that was the range for which I sighted my carbine; round ounce-bullets and pot legs were sent at us, but, of course, assagais were useless. Our troop was ordered to make a wide detour to the left and endeavour to get on the enemy's rear so as to cut off his retreat when the rest of the column should make a frontal attack. The top of the hill was devoid of timber, so we cantered away to see what could be done, but in a short time we came to a maze of ravines, precipices and wooded kloofs, which frustrated all attempts to get to the required position; however, we flushed many isolated parties of Griquas who would give us a warm reception and then disappear down cliffs and precipices that made one giddy to look down; I don't know how they did it, but they did. The men would invariably get away, but the women could not always accompany them. At one place we crossed from hill to hill on a connecting bridge about three hundred yards wide, the sides of which were absolutely vertical; a Kafir girl was sitting on a boulder at its extreme edge. A bugler rode to the spot and there occurred another "regrettable incident."

[Should any reader doubt the statements I make in this connection, if he will refer to the *Illustrated London News* of 23rd February, 1878, he may read what an official observer reports about the operations of Colonel Glyn's column in Galekaland on 14th January of that year.

The report says:

"It was said that some [men] were discovered making their escape in the disguise of women; in

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consequence the firing became indiscriminate, and several women were shot."]

About midday when we were driving a party of Griquas along the top of a wooded hill one of our men, together with his horse, became disabled; the troop was advancing so rapidly Captain Nesbitt directed me to remain with three men to assist the wounded man and follow in rear of the troop; a short time afterwards some unexpected emergency arose and away went the troop at full gallop till it disappeared from sight; naturally we had been forgotten. I saw that the safest plan was to make for the open country, so we descended the hill and reached a grassy valley where fortunately we came across the fresh spoor of a lot of shod horses which evidently belonged to our forces; following the spoor we soon came to a troop of Volunteers who were off-saddled and engaged in cooking. They had taken about twenty Griqua prisoners, who were sitting in a ring guarded by a sentry who sat on a boulder. I explained to the commanding officer why we were there, and we then off-saddled and began making coffee. After a while a Volunteer strolled over to the bunch of prisoners and in their own language advised them to make a bolt for it, they could easily get away and the sentry wouldn't shoot. One of my men who was Colonial born could speak Kafir; he told me what the Volunteer was up to, so I told him to tell the Kafirs to sit tight, as the advice that had been given them was only a plant to shoot them as escaping prisoners. How do I know that my suspicions were justified? I don't *know;* I don't even know that the sun will rise to-morrow, but I think it extremely probable that it will.

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In the course of half an hour our troop arrived at the trot; Captain Nesbitt had realized that with the wounded man we could not possibly keep in touch with the troop when it broke into a gallop, so as soon as circumstances permitted he returned to hunt us up; fortunately my horse had an extraordinarily large hoof, and one of the men who was clever at spooring recognized the shoe-print, so there was no difficulty in tracking us. The disabled man was left with the Volunteer troop which was going to remain in bivouac till the following day, and we moved on; from the top of a hill we saw the smoke rising from several burning grass huts; this indicated the position of our column which we soon rejoined.

A large herd of cattle and many goats had been captured, so the column descended into a broad grassy valley where it was decided that we should bivouac for the night. The cattle and the disabled men were sent back to Cathcart in charge of the Fingoes under their leader, and we were preparing to make ourselves comfortable when our scouts came in with the report that a small band of Griquas were driving away a bunch of their cattle through a cañon about two miles distant. A party of burghers started in pursuit, and Captain Nesbitt said that any of us that wished could also go, though he was not going to make it an order; about half a dozen of us joined the party.

At the far end of the cañon we captured the cattle and a few ponies and goats, but it was slow work driving them back, so it was growing dark when we returned to the bivouac. I then realized what a fool I had been, as I was so tired and stiff that I could hardly dismount; we had been climbing and skirmish-

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ing since dawn. However, I had a great supper: goat's milk in my coffee, and goat mutton cooked on the embers of the camp fire; I "ate like a passenger."

At sunrise the man whose saddle and blanket was placed next to my own awoke me and asked:

"Got a pretty good conscience, Sergeant?"

"Ja, anyone been pinching your pocket-book?"

"Nixie, but you could give cards and spades to the Stiff that died of sleeping-sickness."

"Which being interpreted means——?"

It meant this; unknown to me during the night the Griquas had come down in force from the mountains on either side of us, driven in our outlying pickets, and attacked the camp. It had been fully an hour before 800 (no, 799) breech-loaders fed with an unlimited supply of ammunition had forced them to retire to the mountains.

The days following were more or less a repetition of the previous one; we became more gaunt, dirty, and weary, but the horses kept in good condition as we captured plenty of mealies and Kafir-corn (a kind of millet) stored in the pits of the kraals which fell into our hands. One day at noon we came to a lovely little dell half-way up a mountain side; a stream of water cascaded from basin to basin till it joined the rivulet flowing through the valley beneath. We off-saddled, filled our patrol-tins, and began to brew coffee on a camp fire; one of the rear-guard then arrived and went to fill his patrol-tin at the pool nearest to him, and which was just above that at which we had obtained our supply; suddenly he gave a shout, so we went to see what he had found; it was the bloated body of a dead Kafir who had been shot through the head. We returned to our fire and drank

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the refreshing coffee; not a man troubled to get fresh water from further up-stream.

This incident is recorded merely to show what civilized man becomes when he has to endure excessive fatigue, dirt, paucity of sleep, lice, and thirst, and constantly comes in contact with scenes of death and pain.

Yet, in life's ledger there are still to be found credit entries. For instance, at that very time, as we were saddling-up, a Griqua woman in the prime of life emerged from a thicket and hobbled up to us; she had been shot through the thigh a week previously and was almost starved. One man gave her his puggaree to bandage the wound, another gave her a slice of ration-bacon, I contributed two small hard-tack, and I saw a man hand her a shilling while some one else gave her a small piece of tobacco to be used as snuff. Captain Nesbitt wrote out a pass and an order for admittance to the Cathcart Hospital, and told her to find her way there by night as it would be safer travelling; finally a man cut a stout stick and gave it to her to use as a crutch. We mounted, and a mother's wandering boy who let his horse bump into mine growled, "Say, Sergeant, ain't it just hell?"

As we moved to the northward away from the fastnesses on the Kabousie the column was broken up into its several units, each of which worked independently of the others. One morning we encountered a body of Griquas occupying the base of an excessively steep mountain up which it was evident we should never be able to drag our horses, so the pivot men of each section held the horses of the other three men and moved them under cover. We advanced on foot in skirmishing order, and as the

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Kafirs retreated up the mountain side we followed as rapidly as we were able; they were accompanied by their women, who finding they could not keep up with their men, sat down and waited till our skirmish line reached them; they seemed convinced that we should not molest them and soon became quite friendly. We did not advance much further, as the Kafirs were able to climb much faster than we possibly could, but we kept up long-range firing; it was then that many of the women came among our skirmishers, laughing and chatting with them, and bartering brass bangles and bead bracelets for any sugar, tobacco, hard-tack, etc., which they might happen to have in their haversacks, and all the while we were taking long-range pot-shots at their fathers, brothers, and husbands. I offer no explanation of this state of affairs and merely record what I saw; anthropologists and ethnologists can fix it up to suit themselves.

As we worked round to the vicinity of the road leading to Queenstown we came to many deserted homesteads which had been hurriedly vacated when the Griquas first broke out; the farmers had taken all their more portable property with them, but among the berry patches in the orchards we found many stray chickens and hogs which we enjoyed very much. The houses had been broken open and rifled, first by the Kafirs and subsequently by the troops. We often made lengthy halts at these places; the change of diet was good for us, and as we sat round our bivouac fires made from green-painted venetian blinds and doors, we wished that the Frontier farmers who formerly delighted in impounding our horses could have joined our merry circle.

It was on the 7th February, while we were operating

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in this part of the country, that at Quintana an engagement was fought which was the turning-point of the campaign. Our force consisted of detachments of the F.A.M.P., the Frontier Light Horse, the Cape Town Volunteer Artillery, the 24th Regiment (Imperial), some Royal Engineers, and the Naval Brigade, the whole under the command of Captain Upcher, 24th Regiment.

At 5.30 a.m. a mixed force of 1500 Galekas and Gaikas in two divisions attacked the camp; as soon as they came within range Lieutenant Cochrane opened fire with the 9-pounder of our artillery troop, and immediately afterwards the 7-pounder of the Cape Artillery and the war-rockets of the Naval Brigade took a hand; Martini-Henry rifles and Snider carbines built a wall of lead round the camp, so the enemy withdrew to the surrounding wooded hills where they were reinforced by 2500 men, and the fighting continued throughout the day. Sub-Inspector Hatton with a troop of F.A.M.P. took up a position on one of the heights above a wooded kloof up which a large party of Kafirs advanced; our men were being very hard pressed when Captain Whalley with the Frontier Light Horse and one company of the 24th Regiment came to their assistance, and the Kafirs were repulsed.

Chief Kreli was present during the engagement, but the Galekas were actually led by the witch-doctor Gneto; at last the Kafirs became convinced that something had gone wrong with the charms that Gneto had prepared to convert the lead of the white man's ammunition into harmless smoke, and they retreated in all directions, many of them escaping by descending cliffs and precipices assisted by grass ropes

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that they fabricated. The troops in pursuit captured great numbers of cattle, sheep, and ponies; Brabant's Horse while scouring the sea-flats being particularly successful in this respect.

South African warfare, both inter-tribal and that between whites and natives, has always consisted to a large extent in capturing the enemy's stock; the defeat and destruction of the enemy in battle appeared to be of secondary consideration; it was easier and safer merely to take his food away from him and let him starve to death; the method was eminently successful in the Gaika-Galeka war, though it did not meet with the approval of philanthropists in Exeter Hall, London, who were themselves in no danger of being " driven into the sea " by a coloured race outnumbering them ten to one; the shoe does not pinch the person who walks bare-footed!

It was while we were resting-up at Cathcart that some of the men of the burgher force told our fellows that they thought there would be a distribution of some of the money realized by the sale of captured cattle; the information didn't interest us much because as we were Colonial regulars we should be out of it. Round the camp fire the subject would sometimes crop up, and I would voice my opinion that the goat-mutton we had eaten when on patrol was about all the loot we should get; one evening the troop clerk asked me if I would sell my chance and said he would give me three pounds for it. It was a shame to take the money, it was like pulling a blind kitten's tail, but as he produced the coins I took them from him, calling on the fellows to witness that he was neither drunk nor asleep, only crazy. The following morning there appeared in Troop Orders

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a paragraph stating that payment of twelve pounds per man, "Prize money," would be made at the office at 4 p.m.

It is a matter of official record that Colonel Glyn, in the name of the 24th Regiment of Imperial Infantry, declined to share in the prize money that was to be distributed; it is remarkable that Tommy Atkins should have been controlled by a sentiment of such force as to lead to his renouncement of the award, especially when it is remembered that at that period the returned soldier, to keep from starving, often had to become a crossing-sweeper or engage in the business of selling shoe-laces, pencils, and collar buttons, at the corners of the London streets. The sum of twelve pounds would have been of great assistance in paying for the stock of merchandise displayed on his tray.

At the beginning of March, Sandilli having again effected a junction with Kreli attacked one of our columns at Ibeka, but suffered disastrous defeat. Throughout the whole campaign the bravery exhibited by both the Galekas and Gaikas appeared to me to be marvellous; it was difficult to understand why warriors armed only with a bundle of assagais and a few old muzzle-loading guns which they were unable to handle expertly should repeatedly attack an enemy equipped with artillery, war-rockets, and breech-loading rifles, and supplied with unlimited ammunition; many adventurous spirits will try anything once, but the Kafirs experimented many times. It is admitted that they were numerically stronger, but that gave them no advantage when it was impossible for them to come to close quarters. Suppose the conditions had been reversed, that the Kafirs had

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possessed the modern weapons and had been trained in their use, while the white man was armed only with assagais with a range limited to fifty yards; surely the buglers could have sounded the *advance* and the *charge* till they were black in the face and then they couldn't have coaxed a single man out of his funk-hole.

Further, in the interests of truth, let it be noted that in war the Kafir woman was one of the best; she never fought like a man, nor tortured a wounded enemy as did the fiendish Sioux squaws in Dakota. As regards mutilating the dead it's true that the Kafirs *did* sometimes do so, but they possessed no monopoly in "regrettable incidents." It is well known that their practice of disembowelling their wounded foe was not for the express purpose of inflicting torture; it was, as they superstitiously believed, a protection against their being haunted by the ghost of the dead man.

For the safety of the white race in South Africa we had to fight the natives, and in doing so it was our duty to kill as many of them as possible; but as a soldier my opinion is that a man is beneath contempt who vilifies his enemy, no matter whether he can beat him or not; the politician seldom fails to do so, and the shirker whose patriotism is all flag-waving delights in propaganda of this description, but when the fighting man has become so experienced that he knows his right hand from his left he ceases to regard the mouth as an honourable weapon in warfare. The legend of Fontenoy according to which the officer commanding the Grenadier Guards is supposed to say: "Gentlemen of the Gardes Françaises, fire first" depicts the spirit which, to some extent at

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least, develops in the soldier who has seen shots fired in anger.

Although it was becoming evident that the strength of the Galekas was on the wane, other native races were assuming a hostile attitude which caused grave anxiety to the authorities; the Zulus, Basutos, and the Transvaal Kafirs, were threatening trouble, but it came as a surprise to us when, early in March, a report was received that in Griqualand West one of the Griqua native chiefs had been molesting the farmers and that Major W. O. Lanyon, the Administrator of the Province, raising a force of Volunteers in Kimberley, had proceeded to the scene of the disturbance, about seventy miles from Kenhardt, but on the north side of the Orange River which was here the boundary between Cape Colony and the Province of Griqualand West.

Orders were sent from Cape Town that our troop was at once to proceed to Kenhardt District, and that Captain Nesbitt himself was to go to Cape Town for a conference with the authorities.

No. 8 Troop had been without a subaltern officer for a long time, and the senior non-commissioned officer, Sergeant-major Specht, had been appointed to the command of a troop of Volunteer Horse, so in the absence of Captain Nesbitt the charge of the troop would devolve on the sergeant who was immediately senior to myself; he was one of the old-school Colonial-born non-commissioned officers, and though he was an excellent man in the field and a most efficient "duty" sergeant, he was hardly qualified to take charge of a troop on detached service where he would have to arrange for the purchase of supplies for men and horses, keep the necessary accounts, etc.

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By telegraph, Captain Nesbitt arranged that the sergeant should be immediately transferred to the head-quarters of the corps and given some billet that was quite satisfactory to him; directly he had left camp I was appointed Acting-Sergeant-major and given orders to start the following morning in charge of the troop. I was to make the best time possible, and on arrival at the Orange River to report to Major Lanyon in command of the Griqualand West Field Force; no expense was to be spared in obtaining the best forage obtainable and the horses were to be carefully nursed; in fact, it was to be a forced march. I was supplied with £250 in bank notes to defray the necessary expenditures, and finally Captain Nesbitt told me that I must be guided by circumstances as they arose, anything might happen!

Thus, in merely changing station, it came to pass that for the third time in fourteen months I was fated to ride diagonally across Cape Colony, the three journeys aggregating eighteen hundred miles; Mobility was the badge of all our tribe! On this occasion our route lay roughly parallel to, but about fifty miles to the north of, that which we had previously followed; our first day's march of thirty-two miles brought us to Queenstown, but after that the villages we passed through were far apart and insignificant in size. The second day we overtook a Major of the Kimberley Battery of Artillery, who was travelling with two ox-wagons on which were loaded a couple of breech-loading field pieces that the military authorities at King had supplied on the requisition of Major Lanyon for service in Griqualand West. The Major had only three or four artillerymen with him, so when he heard that we were

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bound for the Orange River he wished us to become his gun escort; now, he was a rattling good fellow and we afterwards became great friends, but I knew that this move of his originated in the pardonable military vanity that all human males possess—each man loves to be in command of a body of troops. Kind fate had pandered to my own ambition in this respect, and though it was only temporary elysium, the prospect of my becoming second fiddle was not alluring, so I told the Major that I had strict orders to march at the rate of thirty miles a day, and as long as that proviso was observed I was at his command. That settled it; it took him more than a month to do the journey whereas we got through in twenty-two days.

We had been on the march for about a fortnight when one of the District Commissioners to whom I reported informed me that the Government at Cape Town had sent him telegraphic orders that I was to push on as speedily as possible because fighting had already occurred at the Orange River, and Major Lanyon urgently required reinforcements. I had already been pressing the horses as far as I considered prudent, bearing in mind that they had been in the field for three months before we began the journey, so I asked the Commissioner to report that it would require at least another week to complete march.

Three days after that, I reported to another District Commissioner who told me that all the farmers in the northern part of his district had left their farms and gone into laager, and that certain of the burghers had been enrolled in commandoes and sent to guard the frontier of the Colony.

For the next four days we travelled through a

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country which was absolutely deserted, so to obtain supplies for the men and horses I was obliged to break into the abandoned farm-houses and take what we required; when the owners got to hear of this they complained to the Government, but the authorities approved my action and did not even call upon me to report on the circumstances though, doubtless, they compensated the farmers.

On my arrival at Prieska on the Orange River, I received a despatch from Major Lanyon directing me to report to him at his camp near Koegas which was fifty miles to the north-west, so after a short rest we continued our march and in two days the journey was at an end.

From Cathcart to Koegas was six hundred miles, and we had marched the distance in heavy marching order in twenty-two days without disabling a single horse—a little more than twenty-seven miles a day.

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Chapter VI

THE GRIQUALAND WEST CAMPAIGN—KIMBERLEY—THE CAPE MOUNTED RIFLEMEN—BUSHMEN—KALAHARI DESERT

The intrenched camp of the Griqualand West Field Force was situated on the right bank of the Orange River about a mile east of the foot of a short range of rugged hills now known as the Asbestos Mountains. The river-bed here was fairly wide, but there was an excellent drift (ford), and on each bank there was a growth of thorn trees and bush from which a supply of fuel could be obtained; on our side of the river (we were on the left bank) the bunch-grass was plentiful and in excellent condition, so I ordered the troop to off-saddle and bivouac while I rode over to head-quarters to report our arrival; in crossing the river, at no part of the drift did the water come above my stirrup irons.

The Union Jack was flying over the head-quarter marquee and I had barely dismounted before His Excellency, Major Lanyon, C.M.G., appeared and received my report. He was good enough to express his pleasure and surprise at the rapidity with which we had made such a long march, and then asked me innumerable questions concerning our operations in Gaikaland, the personnel of the various organizations in the "Old Colony" forces, the rations we received, etc. He had begun his military career in the 6th Royal Warwickshire Regiment and had served in the

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2nd West India Regiment, so he framed his questions in such a professional way that it was easy to give concise answers. He directed me to form camp at the place where my troop had off-saddled on the opposite side of the river, and said that if I went to the camp quartermaster and signed a ration return, a scotch cart would be sent across with the rations and forage for our troop; we found these to be excellent in quality and liberal in quantity, and they included an allowance of tobacco and rum, which were luxuries we never had received in Gaikaland.

The Griqualand West Field Force had been hurriedly raised in Kimberley and, with the exception of a small detachment of the Griqualand West Constabulary, consisted entirely of Volunteers, most of whom were diamond diggers. There was a battery of Kimberley Field Artillery, some troops of the Diamond Field Horse, an infantry corps called the Diamond Contingent, and a few independent troops made up of farmers belonging to the frontier districts; there were only about thirty men of the Constabulary, half of them being mounted. Men from Kimberley, which was two hundred and ten miles distant, were being sent as rapidly as possible to fill the ranks of the different corps at the Front, but at the time of our arrival the Field Force was not strong enough to make an attack on the enemy, so Major Lanyon was very much pleased that our troop had reinforced his command, especially as we were Colonial regulars and had already been on active service.

The Griquas were a very different people from the Kafirs as they were not of the Bantu-negroid stock, but belonged to the Hottentot race with a strong infusion of European blood; as a rule they were not

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cultivators but stock raisers and hunters; they were armed principally with firearms and as many of them were, from the native point of view, quite wealthy, they could afford to buy modern weapons and plenty of ammunition. They would sometimes carry two or three assagais in addition to a rifle or gun, but they were not expert with assagais as were the Kafirs.

When they had decided to engage in hostilities against the frontier farmers they proceeded to that part of the Asbestos Mountains called, very characteristically, the "Devil's Knuckles," taking with them their wagons, cattle, and horses. The mountain range began at the Orange River and ran in a north-easterly direction into the Kalahari Desert; on the east side and not far from the river, between two of the "Knuckles," there was a kloof, the entrance to which was a narrow, winding gorge with precipitous sides strewn with immense boulders and masses of slide-rock; the kloof itself gradually opened out into a wide grassy valley which abruptly terminated in a cliff rising to the summit of the mountain. The knuckle dividing the valley from the river was so steep that it could be scaled only with difficulty, but on the opposite side of the valley there were some bridle-paths threading the range and leading to the desert.

The Griquas took possession of this valley where there was ample feed for their stock, and which they were confident was safe from attack as the narrow gorge leading to it could so easily be defended.

Before it was realized that the Griquas meant to fight, the District Commissioner, accompanied by a small escort of Constabulary, proceeded to the Devil's Knuckles to interview the Griqua chiefs, and had

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ridden about half-way through the gorge when a heavy fire was opened from both sides of it; several of the escort were killed, but the rest of the party managed to escape. On receiving news of the event Major Lanyon, the Administrator of the Province, organized the Field Force at Kimberley and proceeded with it to within a mile of the gorge where he established the intrenched camp.

While waiting for reinforcements, the mounted men were sent out each day to reconnoitre the Griqua position and ascertain their strength. Major Lanyon decided to have both ends of our river drift well guarded, so he sent me a seven-pounder breech-loading field piece with some men of the Kimberley Artillery in charge of a sergeant, and a party of thirty mounted burghers, and directed me to form a permanent camp of which he gave me the command.

A few days after this he rode over to my camp and taking me aside told me that he intended very shortly to attack the Griqua position and that he wished me, the night before the attack was to be made, to go down the river with the seven-pounder and my troop; we were to cross the river and during the night drag the gun up the mountain on its western side, and taking up a position at the top of the cliff overlooking the grass valley, lie *perdu* till the following morning. When I should see him advancing to make a frontal attack on the gorge I was to open fire with shrapnel on the valley; this would lead the Griquas to believe that they were being attacked in force from the rear. It was to be a bluff, I needed to take only a few rounds of gun ammunition, and if attacked I was to be at liberty to abandon the gun and make a bolt for it, as the Griquas, having no artillery ammunition, would

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have no use for the gun. He asked me if I thought the plan feasible and whether my men would volunteer for the service which was undoubtedly hazardous. He was ingenuous enough to explain that nearly all his force consisted of well-to-do citizens who had left their homes and families to volunteer for service in defence of the Province when it was in great danger, so that he did not wish to ask them to take more risks than were absolutely necessary, and he added: "With regulars it's different, you know."

The thought flashed across my mind that all this meant my commission, but, still, I wished to be alive to receive it, so I said that if I might ride down the river at once, search for a drift, and inspect the western side of the mountain range, I should be in a better position to answer his question. He agreed, so taking a section of men with me I went to reconnoitre the country in rear of the Griqua position; the result was satisfactory. I found a place in the river where we could cross, and noted that there was a grass-covered ridge up which it might be possible for plenty of men and horses to drag the gun to the summit of the mountain.

On my return to camp I sounded the men of my troop and the artillery detachment as to their views about going with me for a midnight ramble, and as they were all willing to take a chance I went over to head-quarters and told Major Lanyon that, having seen the country, my opinion was that his plan might possibly be carried out, and that No. 8 Troop F.A.M.P. and the artillery detachment had volunteered for the service.

For that little speech I was subsequently most generously rewarded, and though the adventure never

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came off I am more certain than ever that the tongue is mightier than the sword.

Within a day or two Captain Nesbitt arrived from Cape Town, whereupon he was commissioned a major in the Griqualand West forces and became second-in-command at Major Lanyon's camp, so my own position remained unaltered.

The very next day a despatch arrived stating that a force of eight hundred Griquas was threatening Griquatown, which lay seventy miles to the east of us, so Major Lanyon, taking half the men in his camp with him, marched at once to the relief of the village, leaving Major Nesbitt in command of the camp facing the Devil's Knuckles.

After a two days' march Major Lanyon arrived at Griquatown before daylight in the morning, and at 8 a.m. the Griquas attacked the village which fortunately had been intrenched; by noon the Griquas had advanced so far that they actually charged the trenches and some hand-to-hand fighting occurred, but they were then driven back and withdrew to the Lange Berg range of mountains.

Meanwhile the Griquas facing us having seen the withdrawal of some of Major Lanyon's men from the intrenched camp determined to attack it. Early one afternoon we saw a big crowd of them emerge from the mouth of the gorge and make for Major Nesbitt's camp. The ground they traversed undulated considerably, so their advance was not seen by the men in camp on that side of the river, but from my camp we had a good flanking view of all the depressed ground. We opened fire with our seven-pounder and sent a shell into the very middle of the crowd; our second shot was equally successful but the recoil broke the

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trail of the gun, so we could do nothing more. It seems the men in Major Nesbitt's camp had forgotten all about my having a field piece, and could not imagine what all the noise was about, but of course they took their places in the trenches and Major Maxwell loaded his guns. In a few minutes the Griquas appeared on the top of the rise about five hundred yards from the trenches and then both sides began burning powder to their hearts' content. I took all my mounted men across the drift and entered Major Nesbitt's camp from the rear, but by the time I arrived there the Griquas, having suffered so heavily from Major Maxwell's artillery fire, were in full retreat. I felt sure that as we had them demoralized and on the run Major Nesbitt would at once follow them and attack their stronghold, so I was rather disappointed when he merely thanked me for my assistance and ordered me to take my men back to our camp. Three days after that, although we had received no reinforcements, we made a frontal attack on the Griqua position; as we approached the gorge we were met by a heavy fire from men posted behind the boulders on the Knuckles, and the first man killed was one of the corporals of my troop who was mounted on a grey horse offering a conspicuous mark for the enemy's riflemen. The Diamond Contingent Infantry attacked the heights on both sides of the gorge and after the first rush obtained the same advantageous cover of boulders and rocks that the Griquas had; the latter were gradually driven out of the positions commanding the gorge and then all our mounted men galloped through it in column, deploying when the valley was reached. Here we received but slight resistance, as the Griquas, mounting their ponies,

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made for the various bridle-paths leading through the range and were soon beyond pursuit. We found the valley full of cattle, goats, sheep, and wagons containing a great number of valuable karosses, wild ostrich feathers, and a little ivory. All this loot was subsequently sent to Kimberley and handed over to the Prize Committee appointed to sell all property captured from the enemy and to distribute the proceeds among the troops, as was customary in South African native wars.

The following day our scouts discovered that the Griquas were crossing the desert in the direction of the Lange Bergen, evidently with the intention of joining their friends who had been defeated at Griquatown, so, as there was no probability of their again occupying the Devil's Knuckles, we broke camp and marched to Griquatown, joining Major Lanyon's force at that place.

By that time it became evident that the Bushmen (Bojesmans), the real aborigines of South Africa, had joined the Griquas in their fight against the white man, and though they were not very formidable antagonists, since their arms consisted merely of short bows and poisoned arrows, and as they were only nomads of the desert region with no tribal organization, still it was recognized that they might give us much trouble.

The Lange Bergen, which are sixty-five miles to the west of Griquatown, are a rocky range fifty miles in length; from end to end, Long Kloof was the only pass crossing the range, and even that was, in places, too rugged to admit of vehicular traffic, though near its eastern entrance it widened out into a vale of considerable width with an abundant supply

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of water. It was here that the Griquas and Bushmen had concentrated after their retreat from Griquatown and the Devil's Knuckles, so the whole of the Field Force under Major Lanyon set out to attack them.

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the entrance of Long Kloof after a three days' march; we had left the last available watering-place early that morning so, as men and horses were suffering from thirst, an immediate attack was ordered. From the sandy plain we could see the Griqua cattle and horses clustered about the springs in the Kloof, so the field guns and rocket-tubes were brought to the front and at once opened fire. The Griquas were somewhat acquainted with shell-fire—"The gun that speaks twice," they called it—but war-rockets was a new one on them; these hissed, smoked, and banged all about the Kloof and against the cliffs on each side of it, but it seemed just as impossible to foretell where any particular rocket would strike as it would be to predict which way a shot cat would jump. The oxen and horses stampeded in all directions, and there was apparently much confusion in the enemy's camp, so a general advance was ordered and each troop and company charged as best it could. In half an hour it was all over but the shouting, and the Griquas, some mounted and some on foot, were streaming away through the narrow gorges leading to the Kalahari Desert on the western side of the range.

Then we took a drink.

A large amount of loot fell into our hands as the Griquas could get away with nothing but the horses that some of them managed to catch when they decided to retreat.

The column returned to Griquatown and a few

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days afterwards I received orders to take ten men of my troop and join a party of burghers under the command of Captain Hinton to reconnoitre some hills a few miles distant. We were served out with three days' emergency rations consisting of " polony " sausage, hard-tack, coffee, and sugar; at the first night's bivouac we were all seized with a mild attack of ptomaine poisoning brought on by eating the polonies, which proved to be tainted, so the following morning we slowly returned to Griquatown. Just as we were entering the village we met all the troops leaving for another attack on the Griquas, and Major Nesbitt wished me to join the column with the men I had with me, but as we were so sick that we could hardly sit our horses I suggested that we should be left at Griquatown to recuperate. He agreed to this, and moving on with the column called out that he expected me to rejoin the troop in a day or two.

He didn't win that bet because I never again saw No. 8 Troop F.A.M.P. and it was ten years before he and I met once more.

The gaol at Griquatown was overcrowded with prisoners of war, chiefly women and old men left behind by the Griquas when they were driven out of their strongholds, and it was necessary to send them to Kimberley where there was more accommodation. Captain Hinton, who was the Acting District Commissioner, explained to me that the burghers and Volunteers of the Province strongly objected to being detailed for escort duty away from the Front, and as my detachment belonged to the Cape Colony forces operating temporarily in Griqualand West it would be irregular for him to issue an order that we should escort the prisoners to Kimberley, but if we would

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volunteer to do the work our services would be duly appreciated.

Would we volunteer to see one of the wonders of the world, Kimberley diamond mine, the largest hole ever dug by human hands? Would we cheerfully surrender for a week or two the delights of dirt, vermin, bloodshed, periods of gruelling fatigue and parching thirst? Would we face the ordeal of being gazed upon in the streets by the girls of Kimberley who had been taught by the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* to regard all who had been at the Front as "War-stained heroes returned from the smoke of battle—worthy descendants of those who died for Queen and country at Balaclava and Inkerman"?

We would! There was not a slacker in the bunch.

Captain Hinton gave me a letter to the Brigade-major at Kimberley requesting that after we had handed over our prisoners to the civil authorities we should be given seven days' leave of absence.

Mule wagons conveying army supplies from Kimberley were constantly arriving at Griquatown, so there was no difficulty in obtaining enough of these to transport the prisoners for the hundred and forty miles that had to be traversed.

The small village of Campbell, forty miles east of Griquatown, and one or two wayside hotels, were the only objects which broke the monotony of the long stretches of flat, sun-baked, dusty road on which we travelled for five days, so it was with great satisfaction that I delivered my charges to the Governor of Kimberley Gaol, obtained quarters and stabling for my men and horses at the Constabulary barracks, and reported to the Brigade-major at head-quarters in Market Square. We were given our leave of absence

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for seven days, and I took up my quarters at the Richmond Hotel kept by Mrs. Pound on Main Street.

The hotel was close to the mine—"Colesburg Kopje" as it was still called, though the kopje had long since been carted away and an immense elliptical "glory hole" three hundred feet deep occupied its site—so at noon when the diggers came for tiffin the dining-room was crowded with boarders who sat at small tables each accommodating four persons. My *vis-à-vis* glancing at my uniform asked: "From the Front?" and on receiving my reply he immediately introduced me to the two other diggers at our table; each of these introduced me to other diggers while we were having our after-tiffin cigars; this "chain-letter" process continued and by one o'clock, when work in the mine was resumed, I had become acquainted with half the diggers in Kimberley, and had received innumerable invitations to visit their "sorting tables" at four o'clock when they would be engaged in the process of earning their bread with overheated brows; the rest of the working day they would spend in sitting in their claims under large green-lined white umbrellas beside baskets containing bottles of soda water and a flask of "One Star" Hennessy; thence they would keep a sharp lookout that their Zulu or Basuto boys did not steal too many diamonds. Some loss was to be expected because a native who could not, unperceived, pick up a diamond with his toes, transfer it to his hand, get it into his mouth and then swallow it, was of sub-normal ability; but the digger attempted to keep his under-toe expenses as low as possible.

Those were the days of the individual diamond digger whose claim measured 30×30 feet on which

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the Government collected a duty of ten shillings a month. The elliptical diamantiferous area was encircled by a "Reef" of shaly limestone which was not vertical but sloped inwards, so marginal claims became valueless as soon as they had been worked to a depth where the sloping reef cut them. The value of the various claims depended greatly on their position as, of course, those that were centrally situated were expected to have a longer life than others nearer the reef; while I was at Kimberley one claim belonging to a Mr. Cohen, moderately well situated, was sold for eight thousand pounds.

The majority of the diamond diggers were from the Old Colony, Natal, and Great Britain, with a few Australians and New Zealanders; most of them lived in their own tents or galvanized iron huts, taking their meals at the numerous hotels within easy distance of the kopje. Without doubt, it was the most orderly mining camp that ever existed; there were no hold-up men, gun-men, "bad-men," nor petty thieves, the hundreds of miles separating it from the nearest seaport forming an excellent barrier against any considerable influx of impecunious adventurers and those belonging to the criminal class. Unemployment did not exist, every one could earn a living; even if a man had no claim of his own he could always get permission from a claim holder to work over the debris heap which the owner had discarded; some of the smaller stones would always be overlooked at the first sorting, so by re-sorting the gravel a man could make on an average ten shillings a day, and he could live on that. Then again, any young fellow who was known to be honest and sober could always get a job as overseer in the mine, where he received liberal

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wages and a percentage on the value of all diamonds found " in the picking," i.e. in the blue ground before it was sent up in buckets to the sorting table or depositing floor. A friend of mine, W.T., whom I first met at the Front, found a large and valuable stone while he was overseeing, and received a substantial sum of money as his percentage from the owner of the claim who told me, when I was introduced to him, that: " An overseer who is honest and sober is worth his weight in gold."

The great blot on Kimberley's escutcheon was the abominable crime of illicit diamond buying (purchasing diamonds stolen from the claims by the native labourers) of which the world had heard so much during the past half-century. The men who engaged in this nefarious traffic were not of the " underworld " class, they were not the cauliflowered-eared hoodlums or bank robbers who haunt the slums of the great cities of Europe and America; they were " canteen " keepers, the proprietors of *winkels* (small trading stores), licensed diamond buyers, hotel keepers, and financiers. Although every one convicted of this offence paid the penalty of five years' hard labour on the Cape Town breakwater, there were many always ready to take a chance, and as they were generally men of intelligence they believed that they could outwit the members of the Police Department and escape detection; undoubtedly the great majority of I.D.B.'s were never convicted although every digger and detective in the camp knew what they were. The more brainy of the scoundrels did not themselves buy diamonds directly from the natives, but used highly paid intermediaries whom they supplied with funds to make the purchases; these catspaws were fre-

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quently caught and sent to the breakwater for five years, but the principals planned their transactions so ingeniously that the connection between them and their unfortunate agents could never be traced. In most cases it was new-comers from the Old Country, unacquainted with the customs and prevailing conditions at the camp, who became the tools of the higher-up I.D.B.'s.

Living in Kimberley, there was a certain member of the aristocracy belonging to one of the continental countries of Europe whom I will here call Baron Nickel, though that was not his real name. My brother having met him in London suggested in one of his letters to me that if I ever went to Kimberley I should call on the Baron, so a day or two after my arrival I did so, and was most hospitably received and invited to stay for dinner. In the course of conversation the Baron expressed surprise that I should be satisfied with the pay I was receiving in the service, and advised me to resign and go into business in Kimberley. I told him that being a soldier by profession I was not qualified for commercial life, and should certainly fail if I entered it. He assured me that I was mistaken, and said that there were many opportunities to make money; he was so sure that I could do well that he was willing to back me with some capital to start in business. Although I never intended to accept it I, of course, thanked him for his offer and said that I would think the matter over. When I returned to the Front I mentioned to Dr. Crook, one of the surgeons attached to the Field Force, that I had met the Baron and that he had advised me to go into business at Kimberley; to my astonishment, I was informed that Nickel was one of the most notorious I.D.B.'s in

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the district, and that out of the half-dozen young men he had inveigled into buying stolen diamonds for him, five of them had already been caught and sent to the breakwater; the sixth, whose name was given to me by Dr. Crook, would be certain to meet with a similar fate notwithstanding the warnings he received from his friends. Within three months of the time I was told about this, the sixth young fool was "trapped," convicted, and sent to join his fellow-dupes. By that time the Baron's character had become so well known that he was unable to find any new assistants, so after a while he began to do the buying himself from the natives; a few years afterwards he was caught, tried, convicted, and sentenced to five years' hard labour, fined a large sum of money, and exiled from the Province.

It was the fifth day of my leave of absence when, at 11 a.m., I was sent for by Captain T. J. Poole, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, who showed me a despatch he had just received from Sergeant Heugh of the Constabulary, commanding the small garrison at Campbell; it was an urgent appeal for reinforcements and stated that as large bodies of Griquas were assembling in the vicinity of the garrison, an attack by them was imminent; it ended with the very unofficial phrase, "For God's sake send men at once."

Captain Poole asked me what I thought of the situation and seemed doubtful of the existence of sufficient danger to justify the melodramatic diction used; he said he thought of sending an express rider to gather further and better particulars. It flattered my professional vanity very much that the D.A.A.G. should consult me—a mere sergeant-major—in a matter of such importance, and I realized that any opinion I

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expressed might affect my own future, so I took plenty of time to consider the subject; I then replied that it was impossible for me to guess what the numerical force, position, or plans of the Griquas might happen to be, but I knew Sergeant Heugh very intimately, he was a good soldier, and his inordinate ambition was to earn a commission, so I was certain that he would not blast his prospects by sending such a scare report unless the circumstances justified it.

"Set a thief to catch a thief," because he can read the mind of the other; Heugh's aspirations and my own were identical, the glamour of the "slung-sword" allured us equally, and we were both playing the game with scrupulous care, so feeling certain that I had weighed the evidence accurately I voiced my judgment with no uncertain sound.

Captain Poole decided to raise immediately a troop of horse and despatch it as soon as possible to the relief of Campbell, which was just a hundred miles distant, so a call for men and horses was broadcast through the town; many men who had previously been on service in the field responded and were at once armed and equipped. I was detailed to assist in purchasing for the Government all the serviceable horses that were offered for sale, so was kept busily engaged throughout the afternoon; by 6 p.m. a full troop had been enrolled, equipped, and mounted, and was ready to march accompanied by several commissariat wagons loaded with rations and forage. I, with the men of my escort, formed the rear-guard, and before it was dark we had left Kimberley behind us.

When we were about half-way to Campbell we met Major Lanyon riding at the head of a large column of troops on his way to Kimberley; he told our com-

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manding officer that he could countermarch his troop and return with the column, as the fighting at Campbell was all over, and reinforcements were not needed at the Front.

It appeared that Major Lanyon had left Griquatown with a large number of Volunteers who had been in the field since the beginning of hostilities and who were to be disbanded at Kimberley, fresh troops having been mobilized and sent forward to replace them. The following day, on their arrival in the forenoon at Campbell, Sergeant Heugh reported the state of affairs to Major Lanyon, who thereupon halted his column and waited to see what would occur. Within two hours the Griquas, unaware of the arrival of this large body of troops, attacked the camp on all sides, and securing a strong position on a bush-covered ridge facing the village (from which it was separated by a shallow *vlei*) maintained a heavy fire all afternoon. When at last their fire somewhat slackened Major Lanyon ordered all the mounted men to charge; this they did so successfully that by sunset the Griquas were in full retreat, small parties of them making off in different directions.

This was the second occasion within two months that Major Lanyon had had the remarkably good fortune to arrive just in the nick of time to avert a serious disaster; if, when the Griquas made their attacks on either Griquatown or Campbell, he had been a few hours later in bringing up reinforcements the enemy would undoubtedly have been successful in carrying the position.

I was informed that Major Nesbitt had left the Province, returning with No. 8 Troop to Kenhardt, but Major Lanyon directed me to proceed with my

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men to Griquatown where he had left with Major Orpen, who was in command of the district, instructions as to our future movements.

The outbreak of the Griqua rebellion had been so sudden and unexpected that to suppress it the Field Force had been raised with the greatest speed possible from the inhabitants of the Province, few of whom possessed any military training. Most of the men were good rifle shots and the majority of them could ride, so for native warfare they were efficient fighters, but few of the officers had any knowledge of military office work such as rendering *states*, compiling returns, and making indents for rations, forage, ordnance stores, etc., and keeping accounts of the supplies that their units had received. When the Griquas had been defeated three or four times and it became evident that the time of extreme danger threatening the Province had passed, the Staff found time to have the records and accounts of the troops in the field systematized.

On the line of communication between Kimberley and Griquatown the only post of any importance was Campbell, and when I reported at district headquarters Major Orpen informed me that the orders that Major Lanyon had given him were that I was to be sent there as commandant to relieve Sergeant Heugh, who was to be transferred to Kimberley. When, in accordance with these instructions, I proceeded to Campbell, I found myself in charge of a most heterogeneous bunch of men belonging to different corps; there were the ten men of my own troop who accompanied me from Griquatown, thirty mounted burghers of the Province who were nearly all Dutch, ten native mounted scouts, and about

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forty Zulus in charge of a young man from Natal whose proficiency in their language was his sole qualification as a leader.

I found the commissariat and quartermaster stores well furnished with supplies of every description, but there was not an account book, nor even a scrap of paper, to show what stock was on hand. When troops had been rushing to the Front, the captain of a unit when passing the post would ask for any supplies that his men needed for immediate use and they were promptly served out to him; sometimes, but not always, he would scribble a receipt. In fact, the system of accounting was much the same as that of a penny-in-the-slot machine—only there were no pennies. My first act was to buy some blank books and paper at the trader's store, and install Private Tim Healy of my troop as Acting Commissary-sergeant; I wrote out forms of requisition, invoice, and receipt, and assisted him in opening a set of account books; thereafter he ran his department most efficiently.

The village of Campbell consisted of a galvanized iron trading store with some living rooms at the back of it, a two-roomed house also of galvanized iron, and two old thatched cottages which had been built by a missionary named Bartlett. I took possession of the two-room tin house as my own quarters; it had been riddled with scores of bullet holes when the Griquas made their attack, but that did not detract from my comfort in the least as the climate was warm and nearly rainless; the men lived under canvas, the tents being pitched in the rear of trenches which defended three sides of a square, one of the above buildings being situated at each corner.

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The place was of some historical interest as it was in one of the thatched cottages that, in 1869, the missionaries Livingstone and Moffat stayed for some time, and it was there that Livingstone met Mary Moffat, whom he afterwards married at Kuruman.

Our water was obtained from a spring situated on the rising ground about half a mile north of the camp, and an ample supply ran down in a ditch which had been dug for the purpose.

In providing for the safety of the post and of my section of the line of communication I daily sent out scouting parties to discover if any Griquas or Bushmen were in the vicinity; the patrols would occasionally flush a few of them who would generally be shot or captured, but when there were no signs of the enemy moving about I would send to Griquatown the information that the road was safe for transport wagons accompanied by small escorts. By Major Orpen's directions I had organized a party of native runners to carry despatches to Griquatown, a distance of forty miles; two men were to go every day whether there was anything to send by them or not; the Major had furnished me with a most elaborate and intricate time chart of his own compilation: this showed the day of the week and the exact hour that each pair of runners should start, rest, eat, sleep, and set out on their return journey. I spent hours in trying to solve the mystery of the intersecting red parabolas and black hyperbolas, but as I was not a professor of mathematics I failed to perceive that the diagram was a model of simplicity; it may be mentioned that in civil life Major Orpen had been a provincial land surveyor.

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Anyhow, I got my runners running all right.

We were fortunate enough to have the benefit of the society of several ladies in camp, as some of the married burghers whose farms bordered on the frontier had, for safety, brought their families in their wagons which were laagered within our lines; Mr. Whitehead, the Veldt-cornet (a civil official with duties similar to those of a Justice of the Peace), with Mrs. Whitehead and his step-daughter, Miss Amy Hutton, occupied one of the old thatched mission cottages; to these two ladies I was often indebted deeply, as at times when there was such a rush of work that I could hardly find time to snatch a hasty meal cooked by my native batman, they would direct him to take my rations to their own kitchen where they converted them into a feast that would have tempted Epicurus.

Early one morning two of the scouts galloped up to my quarters and reported that there was a party of mounted men in possession of the spring which supplied us with water. I ordered every available man into the saddle, and in column of sections we galloped up the bushy slope leading to the spring; as we approached it I saw several horses and some men on a grassy mound overlooking the water, so I deployed, extended, and advanced the flanks till the men formed nearly a semicircle, and then ordered them to dismount and advance on foot, taking advantage of any cover which presented itself. When we were about two hundred yards from the spring I saw one of the supposed enemy advancing to meet us and waving a white helmet; as he evidently was neither a Griqua nor a Bushman I ordered a halt and went forward till I met him, when he said: "I am Captain Brunker, the Assistant Adjutant-General, and those at the spring

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are Colonel Charles Warren, commanding the forces, and our four native orderlies; who are you?" Having replied to his question I accompanied him back to where they had off-saddled and reported myself to Colonel Warren, who told me that they were on their way from Kimberley to Griquatown, but that after crossing the Vaal River they had lost their way and had wandered about the veldt till they found the spring where they had off-saddled to make coffee. He asked how far it was to Griquatown and how could they find the road? I gave him the information, but suggested that as Campbell was only half a mile away, he might ride down to it and get forage and rations for his party; I added that if he stayed till the afternoon, when my scouts would return, I should then be able to report to him as to the safety of the road to Griquatown. The Colonel seemed inclined to continue the journey at once, and while he was considering the matter I took the opportunity to mention aside to Captain Brunker how comfortably I was fixed up in my quarters—bath tub filled with clear spring water, a shaving glass, coffee with fresh milk from one of my burgher's cows, new-laid eggs, and some chairs to sit on.

After a few minutes the Colonel said: "Well, Brunker, what do you think about it? If we start at once we can make Griquatown before evening."

Captain Brunker replied: "I think, sir, the horses should have a feed of mealies, and I know that I should like something to eat if I have to ride forty miles in this hot sun."

"Oh, all right then. Sergeant-major, we'll go with you."

When we rode into camp I directed the two officers

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to my tin house saying, "That's the camp head-quarter office, sir; I'll report there after I've seen to the issue of mealies for your horses," and then trotted away to Mrs. Whitehead's cottage. I begged that lady to do me an immense favour—two arch-ghouls had raided me demanding food: food in abundance and of many varieties; Tim Healy must deliver up all the choice commissariat morsels that he had been hoarding for himself; the burghers must make burnt-offerings of eggs, milk, and onions or I'll—I'll—I'll double the night sentries! The ghouls are in a desperate hurry. "Do you catch on? A thousand thanks; Adios."

When I entered my quarters I found Colonel Warren (who is now General Sir Charles Warren, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.) sitting at the table perusing my official post diary in which I entered particulars about the movements of transport wagons, despatch riders, and others passing through the camp; it contained also a weekly *state*, copies of orders received and issued, and similar matters.

He was alone, but by the splashing going on in the inner room I knew that Captain Brunker had not forgotten my hint about the bath tub filled with spring water; it was some little time before he joined us in the office.

Colonel Warren then questioned me about the quantity of commissariat stores on hand, so I sent for Tim Healy's books and vouchers, and laid them on the table for his inspection; he spent some time in examining them, but as I had always been very careful to see that all the items such as, "One-thirty-sixth of an ounce of pepper and one-twentieth of an ounce of mustard" had been properly recorded I was not sorry

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to see him so busily engaged with the accounts—if he could stand it, I could.

When he had finished I determined that I would play my best trump card. I produced Major Orpen's time chart for the native runners, and said that hitherto the runners had been most punctual; for fully two minutes there was a profound silence while the Colonel studied the chart; he then looked me, very sternly, straight in the eye, and tapping the diagram with his knuckles demanded, "Do you understand this thing?" What a fool I had been to run such a risk; I might have guessed that he would ask me that very question, but before I had time to utter the necessary lie the back-door of the office was violently kicked, and on my opening it, in walked my batman and two helpers that he had inspanned, bearing large trays covered with bowls of steaming soup, various dishes filled with savoury meats, a coffee pot, a jar of wild honey, an omelet, a white tablecloth, plated spoons, knives and forks, and a large pitcher of milk.

Ghouls do not hurry over their ghouling, so it must have been fully noon when Captain Brunker (who by that time had cut out the "Sergeant-major") said, "Upon my soul, Thompson, you possess quite a *chef*"; I offered the explanation, "Well, sir, my batman used to be Slush at the Richmond Hotel in Kimberley, so he knows pretty well how to cook my rations."

In the course of the afternoon the patrol came in and reported that the Griquatown road was all clear, so the two officers with their orderlies set out on their journey.

All this happened on Thursday the 5th September, 1878; on the following Monday I received an official

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envelope containing only a small scrap of foolscap paper on which was written the following:

COPY DIVISIONAL ORDER No. 12. Sept. 7th, 1878.

Sgt.-major Thompson of F.A.M. Police at Campbell is appointed as Acting-Lieutenant from Sept. 10th, 1878.

By order,
(Sgd.) H. M. E. BRUNKER,
Capt., A.A.G.

In due course the following was published in the *Gazette*:

GENERAL ORDER No. 83.

His Honour the Acting Administrator has been pleased to make the following appointments:

Acting Lieut. Chas. W. Thompson to be Lieutenant from 10th September, 1878.

Dr. E. Dyer, Jun., to be Surgeon to German Corps.

By order,
T. J. POOLE,
Captain, D.A.A.G.

Office A.A. General,
Kimberley, 5th March, 1879.

That little bit of foolscap paper gave me the pleasantest thrill that I have ever experienced, and to this day it is carefully preserved with other cherished mementoes of an ill-spent life. To earn a commission had, for many years, been my sole ambition, so its possession filled me with happiness and gratitude to His Honour the Administrator, Major Lanyon, who in making the appointment perhaps bore in mind the part he had intended me to take in his plan for attacking the Griqua position at the Devil's Knuckles.

It was soon after this that the Legislature of Cape Colony committed a most tyrannical and dishonourable

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act; it passed a law converting the Frontier Armed Mounted Police, without the consent of its members, into the regiment of Capt Mounted Riflemen. The old corps was not disbanded, as in justice it should have been, nor were the mounted policemen allowed to claim their discharges—the Act made them, *nolens volens*, Cape Mounted Riflemen (soldiers).

It is admitted that the rate of pay was not altered and that the duties would continue to be approximately the same as before, but it was shameful to arbitrarily change from civil to military the status of the men.

It has already been explained that the great majority of the men were young Englishmen who had engaged to serve the Colony for three years as mounted policemen, and they were all imbued with the strong English prejudice against the wearers of a soldier's uniform—and now they themselves were soldiers; what would their sisters say?

Imagine a London Metropolitan mounted policeman being forced into, say, the 17th Lancers, or a trooper of the Pennsylvania Constabulary compelled by law to serve in the 2nd U.S. Cavalry! it seems "unthinkable," yet that is exactly what, in principle, the Cape Colony Parliament did to us.

At the end of the month many of the men refused to sign the pay-rolls of the Cape Mounted Riflemen and in consequence they were tried for mutiny, convicted, and sent to the breakwater. Undoubtedly they acted within their rights and were most unjustly treated; perhaps they were foolish thus to assume the rôle of martyrs who are generally, if not invariably, just a wee bit "nutty."

Many other men deserted, and some of these that I

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subsequently met in other parts of the world exhibited no shame while claiming that they counterbalanced legislative injustice by running away; but I cannot understand the frame of mind of a man who, with uplifted right hand, calls upon his Deity to witness that he will faithfully perform his duty as a mounted policeman for three years and then falsifies his oath just because a body of rascally politicians treats him unfairly.

Personally, I didn't care as much as the historical "tuppenny damn" of the Duke of Wellington whether I was a rifleman or a mounted policeman for the remainder of my engagement, but as I had now become a commissioned officer in the Griqualand West service I applied to Colonel Z. A. Bayly, commanding the Cape Mounted Riflemen, for my discharge from that regiment. In a week or two the discharge certificate was sent to me by Lieutenant Flynn, commanding No. 8 Troop, who had been good enough to enter in it a very flattering record of my services.

As the months rolled by the resistance of the Griquas weakened, and ceasing to operate in the country lying between Kimberley and Griquatown they confined their activities to the regions north of the Orange River and south of the Kalahari Desert. It was a matter of surprise to us that their supply of arms and ammunition had held out so long, but one of the prisoners that we captured gave away the secret; acting on the information furnished by him a patrol was sent to a mission station situated on the north bank of the Orange River. In a cellar of the mission buildings a large quantity of ammunition and guns of different descriptions was discovered; the search party loaded this on wagons and carried it to Griquatown while the

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white traitor in charge of the institution was removed to Kimberley, where he was made to understand that soul-saving and gun-running were two separate industries which should not be carried on under one licence. We, at the Front, were very indignant that no adequate punishment was meted out to him, but the authorities undoubtedly remembered the treatment accorded to Governor Eyre in Jamaica, West Indies, and were wise enough to let sleeping dogs lie.

One afternoon, shortly before I left Campbell, the sentry observed a small party of natives among the bushes about half a mile from the camp; taking a dozen mounted men with me I galloped to the spot, but although there were innumerable footprints the natives had disappeared, so I sent the men circling round the place where I had halted hoping that some of them would cut the spoor left by the retreating natives in the sandy soil, and that we should thus be able to track and overtake them. Presently one of the men gave a shout, and as I started to join him my forage cap, which was of the pill-box pattern, fell to the ground; I didn't wait to pick it up but trotted off to the man who thought that he had found the spoor. However, he was mistaken; we searched for about a quarter of an hour in vain, so I determined to abandon the quest and return to camp. On our way back I went to the place where I had dropped my forage cap, but to my surprise it had disappeared; dismounting, I carefully searched all round the spot but without any success—I was completely puzzled.

The mystery was not solved till about six months afterwards when I happened to be at Campbell on a visit; three Griquas came in to register with the Field-cornet as having laid down their arms, and one

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of them produced my forage cap, explaining that the day I lost it they saw my party galloping towards them and knew that they couldn't escape by running away, so they lay down on the sand under a bush and wriggled about till they were completely hidden by the sand covering their bodies and heads—this is a trick the Bushmen frequently employ when all other means of escape from their enemies fail. When my cap fell off I was actually within twenty feet of them without discovering their presence, and when I started to join the man who had shouted, one of the Griquas prepared to shoot me in the back, but was restrained by his companions who realized that the only chance they had to save their lives was to remain perfectly quiet. It was while we were riding round looking for the spoor that they stole away in the opposite direction, taking with them my forage cap which, as they were abandoning the war-path, they handed over to the Field-cornet as a peace-offering.

I had received instructions from head-quarters to adjust any claims for compensation for stock which had been commandeered by the troops from loyal natives in the vicinity of Campbell; one day a Bushman who owned a few goats applied for payment for some of them which, at different times, had been taken by troops passing his kraal; I made a searching investigation which convinced me that his claim was genuine, so I asked him, through the interpreter, how many of his goats had been commandeered; he replied "Plenty" which indicated that at least more than two had been taken, but as a Bushman's arithmetical attainments are limited he could not be more definite. In the course of much questioning he happened to remark that every time a goat was taken

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he cut a notch in a piece of stick which was hanging up in his kraal. I sent a corporal to obtain the stick, which was found to have five notches cut in it, so I paid the Bushman £2 10s., which was the market price of five goats, and in the necessary invoice I added a note explaining the circumstances, and attached to it, by red tape and sealing wax, the notched stick as a "voucher." A debit entry in a merchant's books is fairly good evidence that goods have been delivered—and I trusted that the auditor would recognize the principle—he did, and the Treasury passed my accounts as quite correct.

Soon after this it became evident that the protection of a garrison was no longer needed at Campbell, so I received instructions to dismiss the burghers, and proceed with the rest of my men to Griquatown; on my arrival there I was informed by Major Orpen that a Bushman from the northern part of the Kalahari Desert had reported to him that there was a party of hostile Bushmen concealed in a kloof in the Lange Bergen; he said that he had lost his way and was dying from thirst when some of the Lange Bergen Bushmen came across him in the desert and took him back to their camp where they nursed him till he was strong enough to travel; he then came in to Griquatown and told Major Orpen all about it; he was willing to guide to the kloof any white men who wished to capture his benefactors!

We naturally suspected a clumsy trap of some sort; however, I was given a reinforcement of mounted men together with a couple of transport wagons, and told to go and investigate.

After three days of easy marching we came to the foot of the mountain range and within a short distance

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of the place where the Bushman camp was supposed to be. The following morning, an hour before dawn, I set out with the mounted men, keeping the guide within three feet of my drawn revolver; just as the day broke we arrived at a very narrow gorge flanked on one side by a precipice, and on the other by gigantic boulders which had rolled down the mountain side. Riding *very cautiously* into the mouth of the gorge I saw that it suddenly opened out into a grassy slope covered with small brush shelters, but not a human being was visible; we were too early for them as they had not adopted daylight-saving. As quietly as possible the men were dismounted and extended in a skirmish line facing the shelters. Presently a very old Bushman crawled out and raked together the embers of his camp fire; he suddenly caught sight of us and rushing behind some rocks gave tongue to a series of shrieks, clicks, and double clicks, that would have drowned-out a barrelful of monkeys.

A horde of women and children ran out of the shelters and squatted in groups in front of us while the younger men made a dash for the precipice, scaling it with great rapidity in a most wonderful manner; of course they escaped as I directed that they should not be fired at on account of their not having offered any armed resistance. We captured more than fifty women and children, some old men, and a few cows which had evidently been stolen from frontier farmers. After setting fire to the camp we returned to our wagons in which the prisoners were placed, and we started on our leisurely journey towards home.

At noon we outspanned and I had a liberal feed of mealie meal issued to the half-starved wretches; while they were cooking it I noticed a small Bushman baby

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sitting on the sand in rear of one of the wagons; it was too young to walk (it was perhaps eighteen months old—I don't know, I'm no judge), but it crawled to an ant-hill about twenty yards distant and began catching and eating the ants: by the way, ants form the staple article of diet of the Bushmen when they fail to kill any game. To me, it was a strange sight to see such a young human being hustling its own living and acting so independently, but I decided that it (sex unknown) was entitled to its share of Government rations, so I told the interpreter to find its mother—it had no mother, and none of the women seemed willing to attend to it till I spoke very unkindly to one of them, then all went well.

Perhaps it is advisable to record here how the baby fared after it had been literally fed up with mealie meal mush; Private Bartholomew of No. 8 Troop, Cape Mounted Riflemen, who was Colonial born, asked me to give him the baby. Hell's bells! it wasn't mine to give, but he pleaded so pitifully that at last I said that if he chose to steal it I wouldn't look. However, I kept my eye on him; he cut off a strip of his saddle cloth and fashioned it into a twelve-inch kimono which he draped around his ill-gotten prize; he lined his horse's nosebag with hand-picked bunch-grass, making a very comfortable nest for the youngster; when on the march, he suspended the nosebag by its strap over his left shoulder so that baby travelled just behind his right elbow—poor baby, poor horse!

The three days occupied by our journey back to Griquatown were full of interest as the three-score members of the Bushman race that we had captured afforded an unequalled object lesson in nomadic savage life. They were entirely without garments,

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though some of them had a piece of deer skin round their loins fastened by large thorns; a few had skin pelisses or karosses which at night they used as wraps. The women, on an average, were little more than four feet in height and none of them exceeded four and a half feet, though the men were a few inches taller, one of them being nearly five feet.

In colour they were a dirty yellow; they had prominent cheek-bones, slightly slanting eyes, and gaping nostrils with just a suggestion of a button nose. Their heads were dotted with small tufts or pellets of crinkly hair, and their parchment-like skins appeared too large for them, as in some parts of their bodies it lay in corrugations almost like the bellows of a half-closed concertina.

In profile the women presented a most grotesque appearance on account of their strangely hollowed backs and immense protruding stomachs which were fully counterbalanced on the opposite side by an abnormal development of the dorsal region. One of them was such a perfect specimen of malformation that I requested the interpreter to tell her that I should like to ascertain her exact proportions and that her fee would be a small piece of tobacco; she was delighted, so I fashioned a fairly accurate tape-line and found that she was fifty-three inches in height and fifty-four inches round the equator. I entered these measurements in my notebook at the time, so they are trustworthy.

It is not desirable that all the physical characteristics of these remarkable human beings should be alluded to in these pages, but it may be stated that in most cases the women of the Bushman race have what the anthropologists have termed the "Hottentot Apron."

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Although I allowed them to help themselves to all the mealie meal they cared to cook and eat, they took every opportunity to supply themselves with food to which they were more accustomed and which they found more palatable. A woman would knock to pieces an ant-hill and seizing the escaping ants spread them out on a tray made of plaited grass where, in an hour or two, the hot sun would desiccate them; using two flat stones she would then grind them to powder which she stirred into a pot of boiling water till it had the consistency of mush; with the exception of raw ant's eggs this was their favourite dish. However, they would eat anything in the insect line that they happened to come across; I have frequently seen them searching their children for *pediculus capitis* which they invariably ate when, as was usually the case, their hunt was successful.

As regards the men, notwithstanding their diminutive stature and poor physique they undoubtedly possessed more individual courage than any other native in South Africa; if instead of being members of isolated nomadic families they had had a tribal organization under powerful chiefs, they would probably have been successful in repelling the attacks of the Kafir tribes that formerly came from the north and drove them into the arid desert region which afforded them a refuge.

After handing over my charges to the magistrate at Griquatown I was ordered to form camp at Wittewater, eighteen miles to the west of Griquatown; shortly after this Lieutenant Bruce, commanding a troop of Volunteer horse, joined me, and as he was my senior he took over command of the camp.

One day while scouring the country we observed a

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large party of Bushmen on a sand-dune at a little distance; on our charging them they scattered in all directions, so the fight did not amount to much, but I saw Bruce fall from his horse and on riding up to him discovered that he had been shot in the upper arm by an arrow having a shaft about thirty inches in length. It was well known that the barb of a Bushman arrow was always inserted very loosely in a slit at the end of the shaft so that when the latter was withdrawn from a wound the poisoned barb remained behind; when it happened to be an arm or leg that was struck the best plan, if it could possibly be followed, was to push the arrow completely through the limb, cut off the point, and then withdraw the shaft. On attempting to do this in Bruce's case I found that unfortunately the barb had struck a bone, and on carefully withdrawing the shaft discovered that the barb remained in the wound although about half an inch of a green, gummy, poisonous compound still adhered to the thin end of the arrow. Applying an improvised tourniquet above the wound I made three of the Bushmen that we had captured take turn and turn about in sucking the wound, supplying them with liberal doses of brandy from my flask to wash out their mouths. We had no surgeon with the command and it was nearly three days before one arrived at the camp; meanwhile, as at first Bruce suffered intense pain, I kept him all the time mildly intoxicated with brandy and laudanum.

On the doctor's arrival he approved of the treatment that had been adopted, though he was not confident that he could save the arm; he told me that the arrow-poison consisted of the milky juice of the *Amaryllis toxicaria* mixed with the venom of the entrails of the n'gwa, a very deadly caterpillar;

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however, thanks to his skill, amputation was not necessary, and six months afterwards Bruce was discharged from hospital and returned to duty.

In a few months all resistance by the Griquas ceased, and though the Bushmen on the northern border of the Province continued to give trouble it was recognized that the rebellion was at an end.

For his services Major Lanyon was promoted Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel and made a Companion of the Order of the Bath; shortly afterwards he was appointed to succeed Sir Theophilus Shepstone as Administrator of the Transvaal, whereupon Colonel Warren became Administrator and Commander-in-Chief of Griqualand West.

The Prize Committee at Kimberley distributed the fund realized by the sale of the cattle and other spoils of war which had been captured; it was divided amongst the members of the Field Force irrespective of rank, the share of each individual being proportional to the time he had served at the Front; it amounted to two shillings and sixpence for each day's service. With the exception of the few days spent at Kimberley on escort duty, I had been at the Front throughout the whole campaign, so I received fifty pounds as my share. After the distribution was made there still remained a balance in the hands of the Committee; this, with universal consent, was given to the Kimberley town hospital.

Those of us remaining in the field were assembled under Major Rolleston and marched down the Orange River as far as Kheis on the western boundary of the Province without meeting with any resistance; on our return we were met by Colonel Warren who directed that all the units should proceed to Kimberley for

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disbandment, but that I should remain in charge of a troop of native scouts and a contingent of about thirty Zulus to clean up the Bushmen who remained scattered along the north-western border.

The best site for a permanent camp was Long Kloof as it was the only pass threading the Lange Bergen, and it was well supplied with water, so I at once proceeded there. It was late in the evening when we arrived at the entrance of the Kloof, and to our surprise we saw a large fire break out on the summit of the mountain facing us. We pitched camp and I made arrangements to scale the mountain as soon as it was light enough the following morning, but at about midnight the sentry fired at an object approaching him from some bushes; fortunately he did not hit what he aimed at, for we discovered it to be a very old, blind Bushman woman who told us that she belonged to a large party of Bushmen who had, for some time, been secreted in a depression close to the top of the mountain. Their grass huts had accidentally caught fire earlier in the evening, and realizing that the flames would guide us to their hiding-place they at once descended the north-west side of the mountain and struck out into the desert. The poor old blind woman could not keep up with the rest of her party and had been wandering about in rocky ravines till she blundered into our camp; of course, I had her well fed and cared for.

Early the following morning we went through the pass and easily found the spoor of the band which consisted of a large number of men, women, and children; they were heading towards the north, and as my scouts told me that there was no water in that direction I took the precaution of seeing that the

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men's canteens (water-bottles) were well filled before starting in pursuit.

The Kalahari Desert is not at all like the immense flat, arid, sandy waste devoid of a trace of vegetation which is characteristic of the desert of Sahara; on the contrary, it is a gently undulating plain of light-coloured, fine sand interspersed with innumerable shifting sand-hillocks, and many sand-dunes which attain a height of more than fifty feet. Here and there one comes across large patches of bushes and many creeping plants, besides tall tufts of sun-bleached bush-grass; the bitter "water-melon" is plentiful, and though it is far from being a table delicacy it is a life-saving substitute for drinking water.

Of running water there is none, but in a few parts of the desert there are spots where a little water occasionally comes near the surface—"sucking pits" where the women obtain the family supply by sucking water up through reeds, and ejecting it from their mouths into a container which in most cases is the shell of an ostrich egg. The maps show in dotted lines the supposed course of many ancient rivers intersecting the desert, but it is doubtful if their beds contain any water except, perhaps, in isolated pools; at all events, there are now hundreds of feet of sand superimposed on them, so they are of no benefit to the traveller. In the region in which we were operating, the Nokanna River was prominently marked by dotted lines on the map that I possessed, but though we were constantly patrolling its supposed site we were unable to find even a sign of moisture. It is true that violent thunder-storms will occasionally occur in the desert, but the area affected by them is very restricted, and though

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they must certainly assist the growth of the succulent plants and juicy bulbs which are eaten by the Bushmen and wild animals, the supply of water furnished is too scanty to receive consideration.

The Bushmen we were pursuing had a start of at least twelve hours, so it was not surprising that when the sun set we had not overtaken them; it was necessary to give the horses a rest and get something for them to drink; the men had enough water for coffee in their canteens, but for the animals there was nothing but bitter melons. Each man would collect some half-dozen melons and, after slicing off the tops, place them in the embers of the camp-fire; with a stick he would stir the inside of the melons till the pulp and juice had the consistency of mush; they were then taken out of the embers and allowed to cool; the liquid portion of the mixture was then squeezed out and given to the horses; very few of them would touch it that evening, but some of the scouts who had experienced desert travelling assured me that on the next day, when the horses had become good and thirsty, they would tackle it all right—they did; and so did we. It was a nauseating beverage, and the moderation that we observed when indulging in it merited the approval of the W.C.T.U.; with us, it seemed to be quite innocuous though it induced *skitteree* in the horses.

About noon on the second day of the pursuit we came up with the women and children but, as we saw by the spoor, the men had scattered and made off in different directions, so after a few hours' rest we began our return march to the Long Kloof where we had left our two supply wagons in charge of the Zulus.

Being hampered by the captured women our progress was slow; all the men that could be spared I sent

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ahead to make the best time they could back to water, while the rest of us journeyed in a leisurely manner, vainly attempting to acquire a taste for draughts of bitter-melon juice.

At one time I happened to clean out my pipe, which was getting rather foul, by means of the stem of a piece of grass which I threw on the ground; immediately a crowd of Bushman women and girls, who had evidently been watching me, rushed forward to secure it, the one who was successful thrusting it into her mouth and chewing it with evident relish; to them, pipe-oil was ambrosia. For the rest of the journey all eyes were riveted upon me; it was not my fatal gift of beauty that was the attraction, but each woman hoped to be an Atalanta who would be able to seize, not the golden apples of Hippomenes, but the cleanings of a very smelly old pipe.

Once, when we were halted, a woman unearthed and presented me with a small green tuber about the size of a man's thumb and shaped like a dwarf cucumber; she clicked and grunted out some information which the interpreter told me meant that after drinking bitter-melon juice I should cut off a small slice of the tuber and chew it. I followed instructions and was astonished to find how it modified the nauseous taste of the melon; I subsequently tried it while drinking fresh water to which it imparted a very pleasant and delicate (though persistent) flavour suggestive of liquorice root; I learned that the Hottentots know it by the name of '*garp*.

Having run out of pipe-oil I rewarded my benefactress by allowing her to lick a piece of rock-salt belonging to my horse's ration.

The winter months—May, June, and July—were

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spent in patrolling the desert border with an occasional incursion into the Kalahari itself in pursuit of Bushmen who had ventured to approach the frontier farms for the purpose of stealing sheep, etc. One evening in the desert we had off-saddled at the base of an immense sand-dune which reached an altitude of fully seventy feet, and it was here that I heard the harmony produced by *musical sands*. Across the top of the dune there was blowing a gentle wind which at frequent intervals dislodged some of the sand; the friction of this in sliding down the steep side of the dune set up vibrations in the air distinctly audible as weak but perfectly harmonious notes. Though more subdued, the quality of the sound was very similar to that emitted by the Æolian harps that were so popular in the middle of the last century, but only two or three different notes could be distinguished; the phenomenon lasted about half an hour.

At another time on a sand-hillock I was surprised to find three small pieces of fractured glass tube $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter, each piece being about an inch long; some portions of the glass were devitrified and discoloured, others were perfectly transparent. I was afterwards informed that these tubes were formed by lightning striking into the sand (which was almost pure silica) in places where the alkali from decayed vegetation had happened to be deposited in just the right amount to form glass when fused with the silica. On hearing this I was quite ready to believe that violent thunder-storms do, at times, occur in the desert.

By the end of July the marauding Bushmen had ceased to give trouble and had withdrawn to the northern region, so I received orders to disband my

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men and report to Kimberley to His Excellency, Colonel Warren, the Administrator. He was good enough to offer me the appointment of Second-in-Command of the Griqualand West Constabulary; I expressed my gratitude to His Excellency but explained that I was anxious to get transferred to the Transvaal service under Colonel Lanyon, who had been such a good friend to me, and that I also wished to take a trip to England and spend a month there. Colonel Warren very kindly said that if within the next fortnight I should change my mind I could telegraph to him as he would keep the appointment open for that length of time.

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Chapter VII

THE TRANSVAAL—SIEGE OF MARABASTADT

On returning to South Africa after a holiday in England I landed at Durban, Natal, the nearest port to the Transvaal, and booked a seat in the post-cart for Pretoria. There was another passenger, a Major, an army paymaster, who had recently arrived from China and was proceeding to Pretoria to take charge of his department. All went well till we arrived at Newcastle, where the mail contractor was in difficulties owing to many of his post-carts having broken down in attempting to traverse the "Black Mud" district extending from the Natal border to Standerton in the Transvaal. It was the middle of January, the rainy season, so the rivers were in flood and that year the black mud was more than ordinarily tenacious. After some delay the contractor acquired a roomy, coverless, Cape-cart, six diminutive mules, a decrepit set of harness, and a very small Hottentot to act as driver; as many as possible of the delayed mail-sacks, in addition to those that we had brought up-country, were loaded on to the cart, and we were invited to "take our seats," which was an euphemistic direction for us to become strap-hangers—only there were no straps.

The first day's journey out from Newcastle was uneventful, though whenever a hill was encountered some of the traces broke and the Hottentot spent much time in repairing damages by means of raw-hide

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strips, bits of fencing wire, and *reimpje*, but the second day was replete with misadventure. Rain fell incessantly; the thin tires of the wheels frequently broke through the black mud so that the heavily laden cart sank till its floor rested on the road-bed. There we stuck till some sixteen-ox wagon happened to arrive, when its driver would hitch his span of oxen to the pole of our cart and pull us out of the mire.

This was one of the customs of the country.

Even where the road was fairly hard the rain made it so greasy that the mules were constantly falling down; the insignificant little Hottentot had not the physical strength to assist them to keep on their legs by judicious handling of the reins, it therefore became necessary for me to assume the duty of driver, so the native was relegated to a place on the mail-sacks beside the paymaster.

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the bank of a stream overlooking a ford which provided a crossing. That the six mules could not possibly drag the loaded cart through the ford was evident; the water was too deep for them and the current was swift; it would be as much as they could do to accomplish the crossing with the cart empty. Apparently the only feasible plan was to carry the mail-sacks across one by one on our heads, so to ascertain whether this method was practicable I stripped to the skin, and with a mail-sack on my head, waded in.

It is quite a trick to successfully wade across a deep, swiftly running stream; the tenderfoot will generally attempt to go straight across keeping at right angles to the current, or he will even try a down-stream diagonal crossing, in which event the stream carries his body with it before he has time to bring his water-

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encumbered legs into a position of safety; they become entangled and he is swept away. The proper way is to keep the body half-facing the current; at first glance one would suppose that this would result in an up-stream diagonal course, but, in fact, it keeps the wader progressing safely in a straight line perpendicular to the current.

Having made the crossing successfully I returned to the mail-cart and told the Major that our only chance to continue the journey was for us, ourselves, to transfer the mail-sacks to the opposite bank; the undersized Hottentot could not possibly wade through the depth of water flowing over the ford, so he would have to drive the cart across after it was unloaded. I asked the Major to strip and balance a mail-sack on his head, and to follow exactly in my footsteps as I had picked out the best place to cross. He promptly replied that he would do no such damned thing; it was the contractor's business to carry the mails, and as an officer holding Her Majesty's commission he absolutely refused to take part in such an undignified proceeding. Probably the real reason of the Major's indignation was his knowledge that many years of sedentary occupation, coupled with high living at the garrison mess, had robbed him of the *svelte*, lithe, figure with which modern writers of fiction endow their heroines, and that consequently he shrank from exhibiting his chair-filling form which would disclose the secret that to make ends meet he was obliged to adjust his sword-belt at top-notch. His further remarks seemed to imply, very illogically, that it was I that was responsible for our ill-fortune and that I ought to carry the sacks by myself, so I meekly apologized for having made such an indecent proposal, agreed that

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his view of the matter was without flaw, dressed myself, took shelter under the cart from the rain, and feigned sleep.

In about an hour the Major realized that if we did not get a move on we should have to spend an uncomfortable night on the bank of the stream, so scabbarding his dignity he proposed that we should do exactly as I had at first suggested; I agreed, and we went fifty-fifty in the work of transporting Her Majesty's mails across the ford. At noon the following day we arrived at Heidelberg where the mails and ourselves were transferred to a serviceable post-cart having a competent driver, so we accomplished the last lap of the journey—fifty-six miles—in time to enjoy an excellent dinner at the European Hotel, Pretoria.

The following morning I went to Government House and reported my arrival to His Excellency the Administrator, Colonel William Owen Lanyon. On the 16th February I was ordered to proceed to Lydenburg and report myself to Colonel Malthus, 94th Regiment, commanding the troops. I was then to inspect and report upon the troop of Mounted Police stationed there, and to initiate such rules and regulations that I might consider suitable for the troop. These duties kept me occupied at Lydenburg for about a fortnight; investigation disclosed a most unsatisfactory condition of affairs; discipline was lacking, the method of purchasing supplies was very unsatisfactory, and, worst of all, it was the custom to impose fines on the men as punishment for minor infractions of troop discipline instead of ordering them to do extra fatigue duty, additional drill, and confining them to barracks. This pernicious system of depriving defaulters of some of their pay had become established in practice

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in many Volunteer troops raised for service against revolting natives in Cape Colony, Natal, Basutoland, and Griqualand. The money thus confiscated was supposed to be accounted for to Government by the troop commanders, but in far too many cases it came to be regarded as a perquisite of the officer who issued the pay to the men. There was one instance of a troop serving in the Basuto war where it was known that a large portion of the fine money was equally divided between the captain and his two lieutenants. The fines were not entered on the pay-sheet, the men signed for their pay in full but they did not receive it: the amount that they had been fined was deducted at the pay table. Through South Africa the privates were quite aware that this dishonest system obtained, and consequently respect for their officers was inconspicuous; however, being only temporary soldiers they had not acquired such a keen appreciation of military honour as regulars possess. Most of them were quite indifferent as to whether the Government or their officers received the money that they had been fined; it was lost to them, anyhow, so they did not trouble themselves further about the matter.

On returning to Pretoria I rendered a fairly comprehensive report to the Administrator and was then detailed to draw up a "Minute" establishing a Defence Force for the Northern Border of the Transvaal Territory, and providing rules and regulations for the personnel, pay, equipment, provisioning, discipline, etc., of the said force which was to be commanded by Major Creagh of the 80th Regiment, the Administrator's Special Commissioner, with headquarters at Woodbush in the Zoutpansberg district.

I completed the body of this document on the 14th

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May, 1880, and laid it before Colonel Lanyon in his office at Government House; after perusing it he, himself, added the final paragraph:

Lieut. Thompson will proceed to Headquarters to act as Commissariat and Staff Officer to the Special Commissioner.

He will have the rank of Captain and will draw fifteen shillings a day pay with rations and forage.

W. Owen Lanyon,
Administrator.

Although three years had elapsed since the territory had been annexed by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in April, 1877, the most extraordinary misconception of the character, patriotism, and aspirations of the Transvaal Boers was entertained by British officials in South Africa as well as by the colonists in Natal and Cape Colony. It seemed to be the universal opinion that the burghers were not only hopelessly divided in their political views, but that they were racially deficient in physical courage, unintelligent, and dishonest. The sole favourable opinion of them that I had ever heard in Cape Colony was that they produced the best tobacco in South Africa. I admit that at that time I shared the popular prejudice, though I ought certainly to have known better considering that for a short time I had been in command of a troop of burghers at Campbell, in Griqualand West. Hearing, for four years, reiterated calumnies aimed at the Dutch citizens of the Transvaal territory I had come to believe them true.

Peccavi.

In consequence of the colossal ignorance of the authorities as to the character of the burghers the significance of the events which had taken place ever

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since the annexation was quite unrecognized; the Boer antipathy to alien government was made manifest by deputations of their leaders to England to protest against the annexation; many times they assembled *en masse* at various places and loudly voiced the wrong that had been done them; they sent a petition to Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner, another to the Administrator, another to the English Government, and yet another to Queen Victoria. To all these remonstrances they received the uniform reply that the annexation would not be rescinded. Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been sent to South Africa with special powers, uttered his unhappy dictum:

"So long as the sun shines the Transvaal will be British territory; the Vaal River shall flow back to its source before the Transvaal is again independent."

In Pretoria itself the political situation seemed tranquil enough; the British part of the community anticipated a peaceful residence in the country which seemed to afford good opportunities for pastoral, commercial, and professional enterprises. There were indications, too, that the territory possessed mineral wealth as there was a limited area at Pilgrims' Rest, near Lydenburg, where alluvial gold was being mined, principally by diggers from Australia and New Zealand, and some small auriferous quartz ledges had been discovered at Ersteling in the Zoutpansberg district. The military operations against Chief Sekukune (Secucuni) had just been brought to a successful close by Sir Garnet Wolseley, and many of the disbanded Volunteers were residing in Pretoria seeking employment and investigating schemes for money-making.

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When I left Pretoria to take up my duties at Woodbush there was not a single individual who suspected that in seven months British supremacy in South Africa would receive such a shock as to cause even the most placid folks in England to sit up and take notice—even to whimper.

The village of Woodbush (Houtbosch) was 208 miles north-east of Pretoria, and only twenty miles south of the Tropic of Capricorn. It consisted of two traders' stores, the Special Commissioner's house, a Government warehouse, the Landdrost's office, and one or two private residences; near by were a few Boer farm-houses.

A troop of mounted police was stationed under canvas on the bank of a rivulet, one of the sources of the Sand River, which flowed through the village, and a detachment of fifty native foot police, under Lieutenant Gleinister, occupied some brush huts further down the stream.

On reporting to my Chief, Major Creagh, the Special Commissioner, he invited me to take up my quarters in his office, and suggested that we should mess together; he was of a most genial and social disposition, so doubtless he found the isolated life of an official at a frontier station rather trying. Being an Irishman he possessed to an eminent degree that national characteristic, "The divine sense of humour which rainbows the tears of the world," so I did not experience one dull evening during the five months that he remained in the district.

Temporarily residing at Woodbush there were three gentlemen who had received from the Government a concession to cut timber growing in a depression in the side of the hill at the back of the village;

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they were Lieutenant Sanctuary, retired from the Royal Navy, Mr. Richard Jackson, who had recently resigned his captaincy in a Pretoria troop of Volunteer horse, and a Mr. H. L. Dacombe from Natal. Jackson had brought Mrs. Jackson and their four daughters with him to Woodbush; he had rented a small cottage where our officers and other officials received, at all times, a warm welcome. Mrs. Jackson was the sister of Mr. Fred Struben who afterwards, in 1884, first discovered the auriferous Banket Reef on the Rand where he erected a five-stamp battery—that was the beginning of the town of Johannesburg.

The concessionaires had not started lumber operations as their steam sawmill had not arrived from Natal, so Dacombe suggested that, meantime, he should start out with a couple of pack-horses carrying an assortment of goods suitable for trading with the Kafirs living in the mountains; the profits of the trip would help to defray some of the expenses of the firm. His partners agreed to this as he, having been born in Natal, spoke the native languages fluently, so he bought a supply of Kafir truck, and departed from the village expecting to be absent about a fortnight.

Two days after this I paid an afternoon call at Mrs. Jackson's house and was surprised to find that Dacombe had already returned and was in the sitting-room with his two partners. At first my advent seemed to embarrass them, some mystery was evidently afoot, but in a few minutes they took me into their full confidence. Jackson was spokesman; he told me that on the previous day Dacombe visited a kraal where there was a Kafir who had evidently just returned from Kimberley, and who was greatly struck with some of Dacombe's wares; he said that he had a big

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diamond which he had intended giving as tribute to his tribal chief who had permitted him to go to work in the diamond fields, but as he wanted some of the things he had seen in Dacombe's pack he would like to do a trade. He produced the stone, and then it was that Dacombe saw the chance of a lifetime. After much haggling the bargain was made; several coils of brass wire, a sack of glass beads, some rolls of Turkey red, and all the snuff in the packs were carried off on the Kafir's head, and immediately Dacombe, in possession of the immense diamond, headed for home.

Jackson took the stone from his pocket, and placing it on the window-ledge in a blaze of sunlight called my attention to the beautiful prismatic colours which it cast on the opposite wall; he then removed it to a shaded spot under the table and pointed out that the light-rays were still emitted from the faceted side of the specimen; finally he placed it in my hand exclaiming: "What do you think of *that*?"

It was of irregular conchoidal form with a diameter of about two inches, in depth it varied from three-quarters of an inch to half an inch, and it weighed about three ounces; it was faultless as regards colour and its mineral constituents were silica and soda; had they been pure carbon the value of the specimen would have been hundreds of thousands of pounds, but to me it was obvious that Dacombe's diamond was a piece of the bottom of either a broken glass decanter or a large tumber.

Instead of allowing my nature to assert itself I blurted out the truth; the three incredulous and exasperated partners jumped on me with every leg they possessed. "What did I know about diamonds,

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anyhow ? ? ? " I suggested that they should test their prize by applying it to a rotating grindstone ; they did so, but as its abrasion immediately became apparent Jackson stopped the experiment, which he declared was detracting from the value of the gem. To convince me of my ignorant conceit both Jackson and Dacombe offered to bet me eight to one in half-crowns that it was a genuine diamond. I booked the wager and they initialed the entry. Sanctuary, with the naval officer's keen sense of honour, declined to bet on a certainty ; gentlemen did not do such things !

[Eight years afterwards I met Jackson at Klerksdorp where, like a pukka sportsman, he paid me the one pound although he had forgotten the wager. Dacombe declined to pay, claiming that no proof was forthcoming that the thing was not a diamond, as it had been carelessly lost by Major Creagh, to whom they entrusted it when he went to England.]

The Native Commissioner of the Spelonken, a Dane named Dahl, resided at Klip Dam on the Sand River, twenty miles to the north of Woodbush ; here was stationed a detachment of thirty native police in charge of Lieutenant Stewart, a newly appointed officer. This gentleman was a brilliant scholar, an indefatigable sportsman, and a philanthropist of the first water—a noble character whose steadfast friendship proved a source of great happiness to me for the span of forty-four years that followed his appointment. Previously he had had no military experience and as, on joining, he was assigned to detached service he was unacquainted with head-quarter office routine. Now, in South Africa the Englishman generally finds it impossible to pronounce, spell, or remember the native names of the Kafirs, so he overcomes the difficulty by

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re-christening them when they enter his service. For instance: a Kimberley diamond digger when engaging, say, six "boys" to work in his claim will address them individually in the following way: "You're Pick, you're Tom, you're Shovel, you're Sixpence, you're Wheelbarrow, and you're Damfool"; the last boy to be named is by immemorial custom "Damfool."

In the muster rolls of the police somewhat more dignified names appeared, but the same system obtained, the officers commanding companies and detachments wishing any old name on the recruits. At the end of the month, Stewart sent in the pay sheet of his detachment with a requisition for funds to liquidate it. In this document the names of the men were recorded as follows:

"Corporal Alpha, Bugler Beta, Privates Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota, Kappa," and so on down to Private Omega. The Greek alphabet having run dry the final names of the classic muster roll appeared as Private Bacchus, Private Jupiter and his son Vulcan.

I returned the pay sheets to Stewart for amendment, and directed ("By order of the Special Commissioner") that the whole crowd should receive new pseudonyms which the auditor at Pretoria could not object to as being glaring fabrications.

Soon after this I rode over to Klip Dam to inspect the detachment. Stewart saw me coming across the veldt when I was still some little distance away, and drew up his men on parade, taking his proper position in front of the centre of the line. The turn-out of the men was satisfactory enough, but I found Stewart himself attired in forage cap, mackintosh, uniform

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riding breeches, and a pair of *veldtschœns* in place of the regulation riding boots. I ordered the parade to be dismissed and we proceeded to Stewart's quarters for tiffin; I asked him how it was that his uniform kit appeared to be so incomplete, and after making many flimsy excuses he at last admitted that he had given many articles away to ragged and impecunious individuals who, in the spirit of adventure, had invaded the northern wilds of the territory. In this way he had deprived himself of his last pair of socks and boots, and he had worn his mackintosh on parade to conceal the fact that he had no shirt—only a singlet.

At Lydenburg, about a hundred miles to the south of Woodbush, there were a few men of native foot police engaged in caring for a herd of Government horses which were formerly the mounts of the various troops of Volunteers that had served in the late Sekukuni campaign. Orders arrived from Pretoria that these men and horses were to join our head-quarters, so I set out for Lydenburg to bring in the party and to pay the outstanding accounts of the contractors who had been supplying them for some months with rations and forage. I took with me four foot police who were acquainted with the paths traversing the rugged mountains which, for three-quarters of the way, had to be passed over; there was no direct road, and as the trails were excessively rough my horse could only travel at a walk, so the men had no difficulty in keeping up with me. One of the men knew enough of the *taal* to understand me and to act as interpreter.

After passing Mopelo's kraal we ascended a spur of the Drakensberg range till we came to a pass not

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much lower than the summit of the mountain; seeing a small Kafir kraal overlooking the pass I rode towards it with the intention of buying some milk for the men and some mealies for my horse. As I approached it the women and children caught sight of me and ran screaming up the rocky ridge above us; there they hid and none of them would return to the kraal although my men shouted to them that we were quite friendly and merely wished to purchase such supplies as they were willing to sell. I had dismounted from my horse and was patiently waiting for the frightened women to convince themselves that we had no hostile intention when, at last, one woman came out of hiding and approached within ten yards of me; in a short time she was joined by others and eventually all the women came back and stood in a circle of which I was the bashful centre. How they did gaze at me! Anyone would have thought that I was a Tattooed Greek Nobleman, or a Fat Lady, or a Skeleton Dude on exhibition in a dime museum. From my pouch I distributed a few pinches of Boer tobacco to establish friendly relations and then enquired why they had been so panic-stricken when we approached the kraal; the women explained that when they caught sight of me riding in front of the men they believed that I and my horse comprised one gigantic animal (a centaur, in fact) such as they had never before seen nor heard of; they were sure that IT was ferocious, so, as all their men were away at a "beer-drinking," they sought safety in flight.

It must be understood that this was a small isolated kraal near the summit of the mountain, and that the women had never been very far from it although, of course, with their menfolk it was different. They had

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never before seen a white man, and the ravages of horse-sickness (peripneumonia), and of the tsetse fly, made it impossible for Kafirs in that district to keep horses, consequently the misconception of the women that I was not of the Human Race appears perfectly natural.

Descending the Drakensberg we arrived at the valley of the Olifant River, on the bank of which a man from New Zealand had erected a large wattle-and-daub shanty fitted up as a sort of Kafir trading store; his stock of goods was not extensive, consisting of less than a dozen different kinds of truck, but he had some cases of provisions for his own consumption, so I made arrangements to have my supper and breakfast with him and to occupy a shake-down on his counter.

Business was brisk; a score of Kafir *intombis* (girls), each with a native woven basket filled with about half a bushel—thirty pounds—of mealies, loitered in front of the store while at the counter a girl, who had just dumped her mealies into the trader's scales, stood watching my host who was weighing, in a small chemist's balance, about half an ounce of dark green glass beads; with a pair of tweezers he would either remove from the pan or add to it a single small bead till the index of the balance indicated the exact weight. At times the girl would enter a protest that the weight of beads she was receiving as payment for her mealies seemed a little "shy"; there would be a long discussion till finally, with a gesture of despair, the trader would add one more bead and close the transaction. His method of trading was all tosh—the psychology of salesmanship now taught in the colleges. It impressed the *intombis* with the great value of the beads

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they obtained, and consequently trade rates were maintained. At the nearest market the wholesale price of thirty pounds of mealies was exactly six shillings; the beads that the trader gave in payment were worth at the outside twopence or threepence.

Early the next morning we continued our journey, following a good wagon road through the valley which brought us to the foot of Sekukuni's mountain, close to which was the "Fighting Kopje," an immensely strong natural stronghold composed of gigantic masses of rock beneath vertical cliffs; the whole kopje was honeycombed with caves, subterranean passages, and huge crevices, some of which led to cavities descending to unknown depths. Sekukuni's Kafirs held this position when it was stormed and captured by the Swazi warriors attached to Sir Garnet Wolseley's Force that attacked the mountain.

On the west side of the road that we were travelling lay the Lulu Mountains, near the summit of which was Fort Albert, garrisoned by a company of the 94th Regiment; a Native Commissioner named Captain Richter was also stationed there, and as a small detachment of native police was in his charge I took the opportunity of being in the vicinity to make a visit of inspection. After an arduous climb up the ironstone mountain I arrived at the fort about sunset and was at once invited to be the guest of the officers' mess.

No matter how isolated and dreary a spot may happen to be the British officer invariably makes his immediate surroundings almost sybaritic; the mess at Fort Albert was no exception, so I passed a most pleasant evening in the company of my hospitable hosts. How little we thought that before the close of the year all the poor fellows were doomed to fall

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in the disastrous engagement at Bronkerspruit, thirty miles to the east of Pretoria.

The following morning, after finishing my business with the Native Commissioner, I descended by the military road to the foot of the mountain, passing Mageneet Hochte, which took its name from the masses of loadstone, the magnetic ore of iron, found in that part of the mountain; so strongly was the ore magnetized that when ox-wagons travelled over the road small loose pieces of the rock would stick to the iron tires of the wheels and be lifted for a foot or two before the jolting of the wagon shook them off.

We crossed the Steelpoort River, a small tributary of the Olifant, and having left the mountain ranges behind us we had a good wagon road on which we travelled by easy stages to the town of Lydenburg.

On inspecting the herd of Government horses I saw that twenty of them had their hoofs so broken and worn down that it would be necessary to have them re-shod before taking them over the sharp roads and trails which would have to be traversed on the journey to head-quarters. I sought the only blacksmith and farrier that had a forge in the town, but, to my dismay, discovered that he was in the *tronck* (lock-up) serving a sentence for being more drunk and noisy than usual. I explained to the Landdrost my difficulty, whereupon he agreed, just as casually as if it were an everyday occurrence, that I might take the man to his forge every morning so that he could shoe the horses, but he would like to have him returned to the *tronck* every evening before lock-up time so that the gaoler would not be inconvenienced. The farrier agreed to do the work at the customary rate of pay (four shillings a shoe), so I took him to his forge and left him there with the

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bunch of horses, of which he shod eight every day. When he had finished the job I paid him £16 in the presence of the Landdrost who witnessed the receipt that it was necessary for me to obtain for the expenditure.

The day we left Lydenburg on the return journey we made a rather late start as rain had been falling all the morning and I had delayed our departure, hoping that it would clear up, but it failed to do so. There was no saddlery or equipment of any kind for the horses, so they were driven in a herd by the foot police who were not armed although they carried their overcoats and blankets. The sun was setting when we arrived at the banks of the Steelport, whereon there was a cluster of thorn-trees offering some slight shelter from the rain, so I decided to bivouac there for the night. The men collected some dry wood and asked for some matches to light a fire; I had a match-box in my haversack but found, to my disgust, that it was soaking wet, there was not a match that would light. Now was the time to show my men that a seasoned veldt campaigner knows a thing or two! Taking a cartridge from my revolver I cut it open and rubbed the powder well into a piece of cotton cut from the tail of my shirt, then extracting the bullet from a second cartridge I plugged this cartridge with a bit of the gun-powdered rag and replaced it in its chamber; cautioning the men to stand by ready to snatch the burning tinder, I fired it from the revolver —Failure.

Repeating the process—Failure.

Again—Failure.

A final try—Failure.

It was then that one of the men cut his kerrie

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(knobbed stick) into two equal pieces; cutting a notch in the middle of one half, he whittled the end of the other half to a bluntish point; four men held an outstretched blanket over his head to keep off the rain which was falling heavily; squatting, he placed the notched stick horizontally on the ground, holding it steady with a foot on each side of the notch, in which he placed the pointed end of the other stick which he held vertically between the flattened palms of his hands; a second man knelt facing him. With a reciprocating motion of his hands he kept the stick rapidly rotating, twirling it first in one direction and then in the other; after a little the second man placed *his* hands against the sides of the twirling stick and without the slightest pause continued the rotary motion while the first man rested. In about a minute a little finely ground wood (almost a powder) appeared in the notch under the stick, it soon became light-brown, then dark-brown, and finally black; one of the bystanders immediately covered it with a little nest of dry grass, moss, and twigs which he had collected from beneath sheltering rocks and stones; a faint wisp of smoke spiralled upward, and in another instant the nest burst into flame.

As it was necessary to obtain mealies for the horses we could not return by the mountain trails through the Drakensberg but had to take a more circuitous route on which there were stores and farms where supplies for the party could be purchased; this road led to a ford at the Olifant River which was generally a safe crossing, but when we arrived there I found the river in flood, so it was rather hazardous to attempt to drive the herd of horses across. Hearing that there was another crossing about a quarter of a mile down-

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stream, I determined to visit it and ascertain whether it would be safer for the horses, so as it was a beautiful warm day and I wished to enjoy a swim, I told one of the men to carry my clothes to the lower ford while I swam and floated to it down the stream. The current carried me with it quite quickly; at times I passed over shoals and sandbars where I had to float on my back to avoid becoming entangled in the long weeds and reeds anchored in the more shallow spots, but the swim was safe enough. The lower ford proved to be even worse than the upper one, so having dressed myself I went to a roadside hotel a short distance away, and asked the proprietor to advise me as to the best course to pursue. In telling him about my examination of the two fords I mentioned that I had just swum from one to the other, whereupon he appeared too amazed for words; at last he exclaimed: "Well, you *are* a damned fool!" No one denies the truth of his statement, but I considered the circumstances did not justify him in rubbing it in, so I explained that I was a fair swimmer, the distance was a mere four hundred yards or so, the water was warm, and my time was not invaluable—why should I not indulge in the Englishman's much-boasted prerogative, a bathe?

He embodied his reply in a single word—"Crocodiles."

The Olifant River is almost as full of crocodiles as an egg is full of meat; in many spots they seem to be literally jostling each other. When dogs follow the farmers' wagons through the fords they are very often snapped up; it is too dangerous for a Kafir, by himself, to attempt to cross; the custom is for several of them to form a party, each man provided with a long stick

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with which he lashes the surface of the water, while they all splash and make the greatest possible commotion; this frightens the crocodiles and keeps them away at a safe distance. Strange to say, they are not so keen after a white man, especially if he is without clothing: the white skin apparently scares them. It was doubtless this idiosyncrasy that saved me. Notwithstanding all this, there was one celebrated Kafir living near the Limpopo River (called also the Crocodile River) who was miraculously immune from attack by the voracious animals; he would enter the most crocodile-infested pools in the tropics with complete impunity, and he frequently gave exhibitions of his daring.

Acting on the advice of the hotel man I took my party a day's journey along the right bank of the river till we came to a bridge which we crossed, and then by following the left bank we struck into our road once more. During these two days I had abundant opportunity to verify all that our friend had told me. Every few minutes the tramping of the horses would awaken some crocodile basking in the sun on the hot, sandy, river-banks; it would flop into the water and disappear. It may appear strange that my Kafirs had not warned me of the risk I should run by swimming in the river, but probably they surmised that I was aware of the fact that a white man was generally unmolested.

It was soon after my return to Woodbush that Major Creagh resigned his appointment as Special Commissioner and departed for Pretoria; Major Clarke was appointed to succeed him but being engaged in straightening out some political matters in the Potchefstroom district he could not immediately come to Woodbush; he wrote a letter directing me

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to carry on the routine work at head-quarters, and to report in writing anything of importance which seemed to require his personal attention.

During the final quarter of the year, although the authorities at Pretoria apparently did not anticipate any really dangerous movement by the discontented Boers, they were eager to gather whatever information was available concerning the plans of the leaders and the sentiments of the burghers. Even in our sparsely populated and remote district a Boer meeting was to be held, and I received orders from the Secretariat to send in a confidential report concerning the proceedings and speeches.

Shortly afterwards a warrant for the arrest of Commandant Barend Voster was sent to me for execution together with orders to have his house near Woodbush searched for seditious documents. I carried out these instructions, taking the Commandant to Marabastadt where, for safe keeping, I turned him over to the officer commanding the fort. He was taken before the Landdrost, who dismissed the case as no material evidence against him was forthcoming. I found no incriminating documents in his house when it was searched, but the following year, after the close of the war when the burghers had regained their independence, the Commandant told me that when we approached the house, his wife had secreted all the important papers on her person and immediately got into bed where we found her and, of course, had left her unmolested.

Mrs. Jackson invited me to spend Christmas Day at her house, where I was the only guest; Sanctuary had gone to Pretoria to see what he could do to expedite the arrival of their sawmill which was on the road

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from Natal; Dacombe had gone to Kimberley on one of his many money-seeking schemes, and Jackson was passing the time by building with his own hands a cottage of sun-dried mud bricks—and making a very good job of it, too.

At 11 a.m. Wednesday, the 29th December, 1880, I received a despatch from the Major commanding the fort at Marabastadt, stating that he had received a communication from Pretoria informing him that the Boers had risen in insurrection and that nine days previously an engagement had been fought at Bronkerspruit, within thirty miles of Pretoria. He therefore directed that I should immediately march to Marabastadt with every man and horse of the Frontier Force to reinforce his garrison, which consisted of B Company, 94th Regiment.

As far as the men and horses were concerned a very short time was sufficient to get them ready to march, but there was a large supply of ammunition and spare arms in store, and it was absolutely necessary that it should be taken with us; to abandon it would be madness. There were no wagons nor other means of transportation belonging to the force, so I sent Lieutenant Gleinister, who was in charge of the headquarter native police, to try and find a Boer farmer who would supply a mule wagon to "convey a load of forage (?) to one of our out-stations." Gleinister was to agree to any price, no matter how exorbitant, that the owner of the wagon might demand for the service. I had no means of knowing whether the burghers in the district had heard the war news from Pretoria or not, so felt greatly relieved when, late in the afternoon, Gleinister returned with a six-mule wagon driven by a young Boer who agreed to transport the forage at

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so much a day. I told him that as I wished him to make an early start the following morning he had better tie his mules up to the wagon instead of taking them back to the barn, that I had plenty of mealies to spare, so he could feed them as liberally as he wished.

Directly it was dark I had the wagon loaded up with all spare arms and ammunition, as many sacks of mealies as possible, a dozen sacks of sugar (I had heard that it was very scarce at Marabastadt), and my portmanteau filled with the more important documents from the head-quarters office. I told the Boer to inspan, ordered the troop of forty mounted police to mount, and the native foot police to fall in. At 9 p.m. we abandoned the camp.

We marched steadily through the night and at dawn halted for a short rest; when the sun rose we saw in the distance a few Boers riding by twos and threes over the veldt in a northerly direction; they seemed to be making for Sand River and I had no doubt that they had received orders to join a commando, and were concentrating at the farm of one of the Field-cornets. It was evidently advisable for us to reach Marabastadt before the Boers became aware that we had left Woodbush, so we pushed on as rapidly as possible, and arrived at the fort at 7 a.m., having accomplished the journey of forty miles in ten hours.

Naturally, the Major commanding the fort was pleased that we had arrived safely to reinforce his small garrison; there were only two other commissioned officers with him, Lieutenant Jones, his subaltern, and Surgeon B. D. Harding of the Army Medical Corps. The two Colonial officers whom I brought with me were, Lieutenant Arthur Bates of the troop of mounted police, and Lieutenant Gleinister of the foot police.

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I desired to hear the particulars of the engagement at Bronkerspruit that the Major had mentioned in his letter to me on the previous day, so I was given the following authentic account of the affair:

"A detachment of 250 men of the 94th Regiment comprising the head-quarter company with the band and a large number of transport wagons was on the march from Lydenburg to Pretoria and had arrived within thirty miles of its destination when a body of Boer horsemen, under Piet Joubert, appeared on the veldt in front of it. Although Colonel Bellairs, in command of the troops in the Transvaal, had twice sent warnings to the Colonel of the 94th that he must be careful on the march to guard against surprise, no precaution was taken. The regimental band was playing and the men were marching at ease. The Colonel rode forward to meet the Boer leaders, who told him they would resist by force any attempt by his detachment to advance any further. The Colonel replied that he would continue his march to Pretoria, and rode back to the head of his column; no halt was called, so the Boers opened fire. In twenty minutes one hundred and twenty of the 94th, including every officer and sergeant, was killed or wounded and the rest were taken prisoners. It is said that our men shot wretchedly, for the Boers were only some 200 yards away, and their loss was said to be one killed and three wounded."

[One experienced officer at Pretoria on hearing of the fight said: "Had the soldiers charged, I believe they would have driven the Boers back." His remark was typical of the ideas that prevailed among old Army officers in the 80's who *would not* learn that breech-

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loading rifle fire had rendered obsolete the "cold steel" that they delighted in shouting about.]

The Major had his time fully occupied in superintending the work of strengthening the defences of the garrison. The fort was not a fort at all; it was a rectangular earthwork, high-command redoubt built on ground which had a regular slope for 1400 yards; from the redoubt the ground sloped downward for 400 yards towards the west where there was a bridge over a small stream; in the opposite direction it sloped upwards for 1000 yards to the foot of a small kopje at one end of a curved, rocky ridge. On the other side of the stream the ground rose more irregularly; the village of Marabastadt, consisting of four or five houses, was situated about 600 yards to the west of the bridge. On account of its position the interior of the redoubt was visible from any number of possible positions on its north, east, and west sides; it was only from the south that there was no danger of the garrison suffering from reverse fire. The only water supply was the stream four hundred yards away.

Considering the configuration of the surrounding country the site of the redoubt was the very worst that could possibly have been chosen; however, it is only fair to state that the military genius who selected it was not guilty of murder—only manslaughter.

I was directed to construct a trench with its right flank abutting on the ditch of the north-east face of the redoubt, and to occupy it with my men. Fortunately, in the quartermaster's stores, there was an immense supply of pillow-slips, which made excellent sandbags, and there was plenty of fencing-wire for the construction of obstacles, so in three or four days our trench was in good defensive condition.

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In front of the redoubt (the south-east side) there ran two parallel rows of wattle-and-daub huts in which, at ordinary times, the men of the 94th had lived, but who now had taken up their quarters inside the redoubt in shelters at the foot of the parapet. A bell tent in one corner was used as the officers' mess.

Flanking the south-west face of the redoubt, the side opposite that on which our trench abutted, there stood a large square building which had been used as a quartermaster's store and a canteen. This now became the quarters of several Englishmen and other British sympathisers who, one by one, arrived seeking protection from the Boers; most of these men brought with them their horses, and the Major enlisted and formed them into a Volunteer Company which he put in charge of a warrant officer, a conductor of supplies.

Every day several of my mounted men were sent out scouting, and Lieutenant Gleinister with some of his native police would go to the tops of the surrounding hills whence he could keep watch on the movements of the burghers; he was most efficient at the work and frequently brought in valuable information.

We learned that most of the Boers had concentrated and gone into laager on the banks of a small stream which was tributary to the Sand River; they were about six miles to the north of us, and were commanded by "Swart" Barend Voster. There were two commandants named Barend Voster in the district; the prefixes Swart (Black) and Rooi (Red) used to distinguish them referred respectively to the colour of their hair. It was Rooi Barend Voster that I had previously arrested.

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One afternoon Lieutenant C. M. D. Stewart rode in from his station at Klip Dam and reported that all the native police of his detachment had disbanded themselves—they had silently stolen away like the Arabs after folding their tents. He doubted the loyalty of the Native Commissioner, a "left-over" from the Republic who still retained his office under our Government, so Stewart, fearing capture by the Boers, had bolted while the bolting was good.

As there were already as many officers in the garrison as were necessary the Major suggested that Stewart should temporarily relinquish his rank and join the Volunteer Company as a private; this he did, though I still kept him on the pay-rolls of our Frontier Force.

From the south-east face of the redoubt there was one direction where, owing to the steepness of the upward slope, our range of fire was limited to 350 yards. The enemy could collect for assault just beyond the crest of the rise and be quite out of our sight, so a small outpost redoubt, commanding a clear field of fire for a thousand yards all round, was built of rubble topped with sandbags. The ground, which was rough and rocky, was covered with flooring boards for the comfort of the defenders. It was not necessary at first to have it occupied, but it was a wise precaution to establish it.

There was an Afrikander named Duploy who came in and said he would like to join the Volunteer Company, so the Major at once had him enlisted. On hearing this I protested as strongly as discipline permitted, explaining that I was certain that the man's sympathies were with the Boers; I added that my position at Woodbush had afforded me opportunities of learning the political sentiments of many people in

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the district, so I knew that Duploy was one of the "Discontents," and I felt sure that he had come to us as a spy. Duploy had evidently told a very plausible tale to the Major who said that I was quite wrong, even prejudiced.

I consulted with Bates and Gleinister about the case; they both agreed with me and we determined to quietly keep a watch on the man. One morning I saw him prowling round the outside of our new outpost redoubt, so I strolled up to it and just as he was climbing over the breastwork I ordered him to be careful how he walked over the boarded floor because, I informed him, dynamite mines connected with underground wires running to the main redoubt had been planted, so it was dangerous to give the boards a sudden jar. A lie well stuck to is as effective as the truth, and future events proved it so to be.

Two days after, the Commanding Officer sent me a written order to supply Duploy with a horse and saddle as he had volunteered to ride out at night and reconnoitre the Boer laager. I respectfully requested that the order might be rescinded as I was very short of mounts and was convinced that the spy (I spoke plainly) would not return my horse after he had made his get-away. I was, for the second time, accused of prejudice.

The spy did not return and we never again saw the horse.

On the 19th January I received orders to take a despatch from the Major to the Landdrost, who lived about five miles away from us and within a mile of the Boer laager. With me I took Lieutenant Bates, a sergeant, and eighteen men of the mounted police. The Landdrost's house stood in a slight depression, so

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the laager was not visible from it. I therefore took the precaution of posting two of my men on the rim of the hollow where they had the Boers well in view; I told them to dismount and keep a sharp look-out, and to report to me at the Landdrost's house should any suspicious movement be made by the Boers.

Halting the escort at the door of the house, I entered and handed the Landdrost his despatch which he read while I sipped the coffee which, according to universal South African custom, had been handed to me; I had barely finished one-half the cup when I heard the sound of horses' hoofs thundering down the slope; running to the door I saw the two vedettes racing towards me with hands down and bodies bent well forward.

To be caught in the saucer-like hollow would be fatal, so without waiting for the two men to arrive and report I remounted and led my party at a trot along a road which, after passing through a shallow rivulet, ascended to a long stretch of bench land which I knew continued to near Marabastadt. The bench was at an altitude of about three hundred feet above the stream, and the road ran alongside the foot of a range of hills on the left flank of the bench, so when we reached the level the view of the valley whence we had come was lost to us. The vedettes had reported that they had seen the Boers pouring out of their laager like bees from a hive, but I had not, as yet, seen any of them; it was necessary that I should know exactly where they were, so I directed the sergeant to ride to a certain protruding shoulder of the bench and discover their whereabouts. Unfortunately he misunderstood me and rode in the wrong direction; I saw that valuable time would be lost if I waited his

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return, so I rode with the men in column of half-sections to the point from which he ought to have made his observation.

Directly we arrived at the rounded edge of the bench I found we had come face to face with a party of forty mounted Boers only 150 yards from us; they had only just begun to ascend the rocky side of the bench and were pretty well bunched together; each of their horses appeared to me to sway from side to side as the Boers caught sight of us and instantly drew rein, but this was probably only an illusion on my part induced by the excitement of the moment. I gave orders to deploy, extend, dismount, and commence firing, and springing to the ground I drew a bead on their Commandant, Swart Barend Voster, pressed the trigger—and missed him.

This was the opening shot of the war in our district.

I was carrying a light Westley-Richards sporting rifle, and the metallic cartridge of that first shot jammed in the breech rendering the weapon useless—and a good thing, too; I firmly believe that the whole of an officer's time and energy should be devoted to securing the greatest possible safety of the men under him, and to seeing that the rules of the war-game are being properly observed; he has no right to neglect his duty while he indulges in taking pot-shots for his own amusement.

A rapid exchange of shots was kept up until about five rounds had been fired by each man on either side; some three hundred bullets had been flying around, but not a man was touched. I caught sight of twelve additional mounted Boers ambling along the valley with the evident intention of getting on our rear; we were gradually becoming not only outflanked but

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surrounded, so I ordered the "retire," and after going about three hundred yards halted, dismounted, and reopened fire.

In a short time I was obliged to repeat this manœuvre, and we were in this position when the sergeant reported to me that he was slightly wounded; as he had flung his off-leg over the cantle of his saddle in mounting, a bullet had passed through the fleshy part of the back of his thigh. I told him to mount and ride for camp; loss of blood had weakened him so much that he swayed in the saddle and broke the bridle of his horse which threw up its head and dashed madly for home. About half the men seeing him galloping away lost heart, mounted their horses and bolted.

With Bates and the remaining eight men I tried to make our retreat as dignified as possible; the Boers maintained a distance of about 150 yards behind us; every once and again a Boer would stop his horse, spring to the ground, and take a shot at our backs. When any one of them got too close to us we halted, dismounted, and had a shot at them; this always checked their advance for a minute or two. Thus we rode for over two miles. They emptied four of our saddles—one killed and four wounded—and shot two horses, the riders of which were lucky enough to escape capture by shamming dead and hiding in holes after the Boers had ridden past them.

I was sure that one Boer was paying me, personally, more than my fair share of attention; a bullet whizzed past my right shoulder, and in a few minutes another bullet passed just to the right of my horse's head; a minute or two more elapsed and then a bullet knocked chunks off an ant-hill close to my right

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stirrup. The fellow was *pulling* his trigger instead of squeezing it. Directly the ant-hill was struck I whirled my horse and looked back; less than a hundred yards from me a man was sitting on the ground with his elbows resting on his knees, a smoking rifle held vertically in his hands; I recognized Duploy, the spy.

Knowing that there was a sluit which would be a good defensive position about a mile ahead of us, and perceiving that the runaways had not yet reached it, I directed Bates to race forward and take up his position on its far side; since the refugees would be able to cross it only in one place which had swampy ground on each side, he might be able to rally them as they rode through the sluit. Bates was splendidly mounted and was of light weight, so he shot forward like an arrow from a bow and soon got in front of the panic-stricken men, and reached the spruit well ahead of them. Drawing his revolver he halted every man as he arrived, made him dismount and take up a good position to defend the crossing.

When I came to the slope leading down to the spruit I was delighted to see that Bates had been so successful, and joined him with the few men that were left with me. When the pursuing Boers came in sight on the top of the slope my men fired one volley, and then mounted and bolted once more leaving only Bates and two men. At that moment I discovered that there were ten mounted men of the Volunteer Company under the warrant officer in an orchard about a quarter of a mile further up the sluit. They fired one volley at the Boers, and then seven of them with the warrant officer galloped off. Three of them rode down and joined me.

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We had found exceptionally good cover and as the Boers, instead of advancing, withdrew out of sight, I determined that we would remain where we were. As nothing happened, our nerves quieted down and we soon began to feel quite pleased with ourselves. The three Volunteers who had joined us told me that the Major had detailed ten Volunteers under the warrant officer to act as my support when we had started out to go to the Landdrost's; of course they should have reported to me, and have followed me at supporting distance all day; instead of doing that they remained within a mile of the garrison and occupied their time in robbing the orchards of deserted farms in the vicinity.

It was about an hour before the ambulances with an escort, in charge of Surgeon Harding, arrived to pick up the dead and wounded. We were told that the Major thought that we had been wiped out, as we had not returned to the garrison with the others. This gave us an opportunity to put on a little cheap side, and to sarcastically enquire whether we looked like competitors in a Marathon race?

I have always had a sympathetic feeling for the fellow who declared that he would rather live a coward all his life than be a dead hero for five minutes. All through the retreat I was in a blue funk; during the long ride along the bench with fifty-two Boers pumping leads at our backs I expected every moment to feel the agony of a bullet passing through my body. The old saying, "His heart went down into his boots," came to mind, and I realized that it was a perfectly true description of the feeling of extreme fear and despair; on the other hand, the fact that I held a commission and was privileged to carry a slung-

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sword made it imperative that I should keep my head, to give way to panic would be hell: and so it came to pass that that day I did my duty—and so did Arthur Bates.

In the four days and nights that followed that fearful ride I did not get one moment's sleep; the overexcited brain was in turmoil, recalling every incident that had occurred.

As we had no stock of forage, mealies, or hay, the horses had to graze throughout the day on the grassy slope to the north and north-east of the redoubt; two men on foot were detailed to guard them. On the morning of the 17th February Commandant Swart Barend Voster, accompanied by another Boer, coming from behind the kopje which was one thousand yards distant dashed down on the herd of horses; the two guards fired at them but missed, and immediately one was shot dead, and a bullet passing through the right wrist of the other broke the stock of his carbine. The men of the 94th immediately manned the parapet while the mounted police lined our trench, and every man opened fire. The two Boers in rounding up the horses came within four hundred yards of us; they stampeded the herd towards the north, and when they were about six hundred yards from us they gathered up all our slaughter-cattle, and riding behind them drove both horses and cattle out of sight. All this time they were exposed to a heavy fire from sixty Martini-Henry rifles and forty Snider breech-loading carbines; the men were resting them on sandbags, too!

It was a splendid exhibition of cool courage.

The Volunteers did not get the chance to do any shooting, as the building they occupied was on the

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other side of the redoubt which stood between them and our grazing ground. Their horses grazed close to their quarters and therefore escaped capture.

On the 19th February, during the night, a large party of Boers concealed themselves in a stone cattle-kraal on the outskirts of the village; early in the morning a Volunteer sergeant on customary patrol duty unsuspiciously rode near the kraal when the Boers called on him to surrender; instead of doing so he wheeled his horse and attempted to escape, but they shot him down and immediately opened a heavy fire on our position. We exchanged fire all morning, and soon discovered that nearly the whole of the interior of the redoubt was visible to them and unprotected from their fire. Fortunately our trench was sufficiently deep and narrow to shelter the mounted police from reverse fire; by moving a few of the sandbags from the front to the rear it was soon made quite safe, so they sustained no casualties; the 94th in the redoubt were not so fortunate. At two o'clock in the afternoon the Boers withdrew, taking with them seven wagons loaded with loot from the village; the houses masked their retirement till they were beyond the range of our rifles.

The following night the men of the 94th were employed in putting up a timber traverse diagonally from corner to corner of the redoubt; this somewhat improved it though it still remained far from perfect. We heard afterwards that some of the Boer night patrols heard the noise made by men hammering at timber work, and it was reported in their laager that we must have had a great many men killed as they heard us making coffins all night.

The Native Commissioner at Klip Dam possessed

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two old ship's carronades, a two-pounder and a four-pounder; he had no ammunition for them, but as the Boers had some sporting gunpowder they seized the two cannon; their blacksmiths cut iron wagon-tires into suitable lengths which they forged on anvils into round balls that could be fired from the cannon. Of course they were not as perfect as cast cannon balls, but considering the circumstances of their manufacture they were wonderfully symmetrical. We were not aware that they had been doing this, so on the Seventeenth of Old Ireland we got the surprise of our lives.

At 6 a.m. we discovered that the Boers had occupied the thousand-yard kopje in force. Fire from both sides was at once opened and continued without intermission for nine hours. Through our field-glasses we could see that the Boers had strongly fortified their position on the top of the kopje, using many of the loose rocks of all sizes that were lying around; every man was under cover and they had constructed a large number of loopholes, blinding by means of bunches of dry grass those from which they were not at the time firing. Since, from its elevated position, the kopje overlooked our defences the Boers were subject only to uphill fire from us, so it did not take them very long to construct an impregnable position; on the other hand, the 94th in the redoubt were having an uncomfortable time of it. A party was at once sent up to occupy our outpost redoubt which had an elevation about the same as that of the foot of the kopje; we thus gained a cross-fire on the Boer position, but this was, on that day, a very slight advantage as the target of our fire was principally stone breastworks.

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In the circumstances it was inevitable that the shooting should soon degenerate into mere sniping—and we were the snipe.

It was exactly three o'clock in the afternoon when we heard the loud (very loud) sound of two explosions coming from the summit of the kopje which became enveloped in thick black smoke; these were followed by a succession of extraordinary hisses, whizzes, roars, and howls lasting for some ten seconds, and then, close to my head, plump went a solid four-pound cannon ball into the escarp of the redoubt, while fifty yards overhead a smaller cannon ball whined, whimpered, and murmured its way to somewhere in the Transvaal.

We had often read about the moral effect of artillery fire, and we soon, from experience, realized that it was true enough.

Owing to the lack of perfect symmetry and exact gauge of the home-made cannon balls, their flight was extremely erratic; a few would pitch right into us, others would come merely within howling distance. Their velocity was so small that we could sometimes see those which were coming directly towards us; we could not distinguish them very plainly, still, we could see *something*.

We got into the habit of noting, at all times, the position of the nearest available funk-hole, and when we heard the report (there was plenty of it) of the carronade being fired we sauntered towards shelter; to hurry or jump would invite the jibes of some fellow who was already in some cushy spot; besides we knew from experience that we always had ten seconds' grace. One morning I was having breakfast in the officers' mess bell tent pitched in a corner of the

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redoubt; Surgeon Harding was sitting opposite me at the small table; we heard the report of the two-pounder being fired so we bent low, sideways, till our heads were below the level of the table; the cannon ball carried true and passed through the upper part of the tent close to the pole; I then became aware that our attitudes had a ludicrous appearance and as I caught Harding's eye between the legs of the table I said:

"Peek-a-boo, peek-a-boo! I see you!"

He retorted:

"Damn you, if you had not stooped first I should never have done so; you are always jamming that ugly head of yours into some safe hole just as if it were worth something."

On the 18th of the month the party defending the outpost redoubt was in charge of Colour-sergeant Freath, B Company, 94th Regiment; the Boers trained their four-pounder on the position and fired; hearing the report Freath crouched down against the inside of the low stone (rubble) parapet; the ball striking the outside drove inward the loose stones which carried away the sergeant's ribs, killing him almost instantly. This incident made it plain that our defences were quite inadequate to withstand artillery attack—or carronade attack—so we set feverishly to work to improve them.

The Major frequently expressed his chagrin that the Boer positions were such a long distance from us; he was most desirous to clear them out with a bayonet charge. At mess his frequent dictum, "Cold steel, Thompson, cold steel!" was getting on my nerves; even in 1881 I was certain that such ideas were all tosh, and yet how officers of the Old Army did love

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the phrase! One day he told me of a little plan he was preparing; he intended having the outpost redoubt abandoned; directly the Boers discovered that it was undefended they were sure to occupy it and then, as they would be within four hundred yards of us, we could "give them the cold steel, Thompson." Hearing this I was astonished, indignant, alarmed, and nonplussed. I humbly submitted that it might be dangerous to voluntarily turn over to the enemy a post that was an important part of our defences, they might be unwilling to return it to us. The reply that the Major made was, "The Boers will never wait for the cold steel; when they see it coming at them, good-bye!"

I knew better than to say very much, but I thought quite a lot.

In a few days the Major began to carry out his cherished plan; the outpost redoubt was left unoccupied; for five days the Boers seemed to ignore its existence and declined to approach it. I really believe that my former conversation with the spy, Duploy, when I mentioned dynamite mines, was the reason they kept away. At midnight, a week after the withdrawal of our men, the Major sent for me and said that the Boers were in the redoubt, so my men must stand to arms and take their places at the loopholes of our trench. Returning to my station I told Bates and Gleinister the news, and said that we should very shortly get the "cold steel" orders. Day broke and yet nothing had happened; the morning passed and still all was quiet; at 1 p.m. the Major came to me and said that as my men were accustomed to scouting and had keen eyesight, while the men of his company were new to operations in the veldt, he wished me to send a man to carefully

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reconnoitre the ground and ascertain whether or not the Boers were in the redoubt.

Calling a corporal I gave him instructions to carry out the Major's orders. I told him to take every precaution, there was no hurry, and by crawling from ant-hill to ant-hill he could get, unperceived, close enough to the redoubt to find out whether it was occupied or not.

He put on a bandolier of cartridges, took up his carbine, jumped out of the trench, and walking quickly straight up to the redoubt he sprang on to the sandbags capping the parapet; he faced about and waved his forage cap to us.

On his return he received from me the loudest bawling-out he had ever listened to for disobeying my orders.

So much for "Cold steel, Thompson, cold steel!"

The Boers now began closing in all round us; under cover of night they flung up a gun emplacement 850 yards to the south-west; they moved their two-pounder from the kopje to this new position, so for the rest of the siege they gave us a very lovely time.

So far we had received no communication from the outside world; every day we expected to see a relieving column march along the road leading from Pretoria, and could not understand why we had been forgotten. We had been on half-rations for some time as our store of food had to be carefully husbanded in view of the uncertainty of future events. One morning a Kafir, avoiding the Boer positions and patrols, succeeded in getting safely into our lines. When taken before the Major he asked for a knife, with which he cut three inches off the bottom of his kerrie, in which was concealed a sealed quill; this contained a

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small piece of photographic paper having on the outside a diminutive written instruction: "Use objective of field-glass." The inside was a micro-photograph of the official report of the engagement at Majuba Hill on the 27th February. We did not realize the full significance of this isolated piece of news as we were ignorant of the course of previous events, but we at once understood that we could not hope to be relieved for a considerable time.

Early in the morning of the 22nd March our sentry awoke me and said there were two Boers with a flag of truce standing about two hundred yards from our trench. Holding up a near-white handkerchief I went out to meet them; they had brought a letter from the Boer Commandants addressed to our Commanding Officer which they gave me. Asking them to retire to a spot midway between our redoubt and the kopje I took the letter to the Major who, after reading it, sent me back to the Boers with the verbal message that he would meet their Commandants at 10 a.m. at the spot that I had asked the messengers to await my return. At that meeting we heard that on the Natal border a conference had been held between the Boer leaders and the British General; an armistice had been arranged and peace would probably soon be proclaimed.

The Commandants produced documents which fully substantiated their statements, and asked the Major whether he would rather that we also had an armistice or that we should continue to fight it out. The Major instantly replied, "We'll fight it out." Hands were shaken, each party retired to its position, the flags of truce at the redoubt and the kopje were struck, and hell burst out.

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Both sides seemed assured that peace would very shortly ensue, and there was therefore no necessity to economize in the expenditure of ammunition, so from dawn till dark the barrels of the rifles were not given a chance to cool off, and the two noisy carronades sent their howling messengers hurtling about the scenery as never before. After sunset, after firing their last shot for the day, the Boer gunners would reload their pieces and train them on some part of our position; they would leave them so till midnight when they would fire their four-pounder, and at about 2 a.m. the two-pounder would be let off—they caused us more sleeplessness than a fractious baby.

At 8 a.m. on the 2nd April Captain Aubrey Sampson arrived from Pretoria at the camp of Commandant Rooi Barend Voster, which was situated in the open veldt about two miles to the south of us. He carried despatches which stated that peace had been proclaimed, and that the burghers of the late Transvaal Republic had regained their independence. We, meantime, were hard at work burning powder with great regularity and sending the noise of battle reverberating from the surrounding hills, so Sampson suggested that all present should ride over to the nearest Boer battery and hoist a flag of truce. However, Voster's sense of hospitality would not allow a hungry guest to leave his camp till breakfast had been eaten—there was no reason for hurrying, what did the delay of an hour matter?—so it was exactly 10 a.m. when we saw the white flag hoisted over their two-pounder emplacement and the younger of the Boers run out throwing their hats in the air, turning somersaults, and playing leap-frog.

It was these monkey-shines that broadcast the

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information that the burgher had become top-dog in the Transvaal and that we should have to clear out.

Within a week we left Marabastadt, and ten days afterwards we marched into Pretoria behind a regimental band detailed to play us in to the air of Moody and Sankey's hymn: "Hold the Fort for I am Coming!"

. . . . . .

Au revoir, South Africa, I'm going home!

Fascinating, sunny, hospitable, restful land, *au revoir!*

As the battle of life approaches its end and the soldier wearily sheathes his sabre he is comforted by the assurance of his comrades that we shall all meet again in the great hereafter—true, but *which?*

A further volume of the author's reminiscences is in preparation.

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